

Solid Waste Interjurisdictional Technical Staff Work Group
Meeting Summary
September 14, 2005
King Street Center

Meeting Attendees:

City Staff:

Susan Fife-Ferris – City of Bellevue
Rob Van Orsow – City of Federal Way
Elaine Borjeson – City of Kirkland
Nina Rivkin – City of Redmond
Linda Knight – City of Renton
Desmond Machuca – City of SeaTac

County Staff:

Beth Mountsier – County Council Staff
Kevin Kiernan - SWD
Theresa Koppang - SWD
Diane Yates – SWD
Gemma Alexander - SWD
Greg Stought - SWD

I. Review of August 31 Minutes

On page one, ITSG agreed the statement about pairing discussion of transfer station and intermodal options should be clarified. In the following sentence, ITSG agreed to change “when” to “if.” On page two, ITSG agreed to change the second sentence under “Report Four Assumptions” to read, “Items in the remaining list need analysis.” At the end of that paragraph, “changed” was replaced with “reviewed and reconsidered.” On page four ITSG agreed the final sentence will read, “The division commented that the purpose of the public/private matrix is to identify differences between public and private options.”

ITSG discussed the relationship between the forecast, recycling efforts and the sensitivity analysis. Engineering Services Manager Kevin Kiernan said the sensitivity analysis is a new forecast based on different assumptions. He said that waste reduction and recycling efforts will affect tonnage within the bookend figures that are currently forecast.

The City of Redmond commented that finalization of the public/private matrix was unlikely at today’s meeting, and that it was undesirable to spend a lot of time editing a document whose purpose is to be used to raise policy issues and develop recommendations for the issues identified.

II. GIS Presentation

The division did not have enough Pierce County data to do the planned siting demonstration. A hypothetical retail project in King County was used instead. The purpose of the presentation is to illustrate the process GIS uses to site a project.

Solid Waste Division GIS Program Manager Greg Stought said that one of the oldest uses of GIS is site identification. To identify potential sites, staff create a list of criteria which are applied one at a time to screen data. In the retail example, these criteria were used:

1. The site is a single parcel.
2. The site is at least 10 acres and no more than 20 acres.
3. The site is zoned either commercial or agricultural.
4. The site is within ½ mile of a freeway.

Stought said that initial results do not always produce a suitable site, or produce too many sites to evaluate, so revisions of the selection criteria and additional screening are often called for. In the hypothetical example case, the criteria were changed as follows:

1. Current land use is vacant or open space.
2. Size is between 5 and 15 acres
3. Site is within ½ mile of a primary arterial.

Stought presented a map that identified parcels meeting the criteria. He said that while initial GIS results can give clues for how to refine criteria, planners' knowledge is important to defining good criteria. Through the county's other departments, and through cooperation with cities and other agencies, the division has access to most regional GIS data. However, in many cases (such as LOS ratings for intersections) the data are extremely limited. The largest impediment to data-sharing is that many GIS staff have heavy workloads and can be slow to respond to requests from outside their organization.

In response to a question, Kiernan said the fourth milestone report and the waste export system plan will not identify specific potential sites for new transfer or intermodal stations. If the export system plan calls for King County to site new facilities, and if it is adopted by council in April 2006, then the division will begin the siting process. For the fourth milestone report, the plan is to identify broad siting criteria that will be refined in the actual siting process.

ITSG discussed the siting process in some detail. The division stated that it always adjusts siting criteria to fit the specific communities affected by a project. Although the same criteria apply in all communities, some criteria are inherently in conflict with one another, such as proximity to transportation corridors and distance from neighbors. Different communities may value these criteria differently. In the past, the division has involved citizen advisory committees, jurisdictions, and interest groups such as haulers, recyclers and environmental organizations like the Audubon Society, as well as school districts, to provide input on how to weight criteria.

Redmond commented that it is necessary to apply the criteria and see the results before it is possible to know if the criteria need revision. Renton disagreed, stating that applying draft criteria would open the process to manipulation by those who want specific results.

ITSG questioned the value of discussing broad siting criteria for the export system if siting is not going to be done until the plan is approved, especially when so much work remains on the fourth milestone report. The division replied that the cities had expressed interest in developing siting criteria, and the planning process has identified a need for additional facilities, so this exercise was developed to forecast how those needs will be met. Since it is true that the fourth report will not identify specific sites, the division is willing to move on if the cities want to do that.

ITSG thanked Stought for his presentation. Kiernan acknowledged Stought for providing much of the data that has been presented to ITSG this year. ITSG agreed that Stought should review the minutes for accuracy in describing the data layers that were used in the presentation of the example siting process before the minutes are distributed.

III. Work Schedule Review

Kiernan said that after last week's MSWMAC meeting, MSWMAC Chair Jean Garber, Intergovernmental Relations Liaison Diane Yates, and Solid Waste Division Director Theresa Jennings received calls from a number of MSWMAC members expressing a desire that the division produce more fully developed materials before bringing them to the cities. The feeling is that time would be used more efficiently if MSWMAC can review work instead of discussing how work should be produced.

Chair Garber asked the division to prepare completed documents for presentation to committees. This does not mean that documents cannot be altered in committee, but that committees do not have to develop documents. Kiernan added that this request is consistent with the division's experience that work proceeds more quickly when the division presents more completed drafts than when the division arrives with a blank slate.

The division added that when ITSG meets weekly there is not enough time for members to review materials prior to meetings and not enough time for the division to do the work. By providing ITSG with fleshed-out materials instead of rough iterations, ITSG can return to monthly meetings, the division can provide documents early enough to receive comments by email, and documents can be finalized at meetings.

Bellevue commented that the previous practice of giving ITSG each iteration of a document made it hard to keep track of substantive changes, and suggested using track changes in the future, since ITSG will only be working with more completed documents.

Redmond agreed with the change, stating that it never envisioned ITSG going into the detailed work of the division's planners, and would much rather see more developed products. Redmond added that for scheduling purposes, the division needs to build into the process enough time for ITSG review and potential revisions to draft documents. Kiernan stated that if ITSG is at odds with presented documents, the division will be faced with either reworking the document or sending it on to MSWMAC for further debate.

The division agreed that there may be differences and it is important to be sure documents are developed so that policy makers can see both sides of the issue. Bellevue added that accurate ITSG minutes are an important resource for policy makers who want to know how different arguments developed.

The division identified the forecast and the public/private matrix as the next priorities on the work program. The division is currently working on a summary of the compactor presentation requested by Federal Way, and plans to have answers to the technical questions submitted by Federal Way and Bellevue within two weeks.

Kiernan said the division is going to analyze the four scenarios submitted by Bellevue, but will separate public vs. private analysis from analysis of Cedar Hills' useful lifespan. The disposal analysis will consider three options: maximizing Cedar Hill's lifespan and filling it completely, closing Cedar Hills before it is full to begin early export, and

initiating export before closing Cedar Hills. This choice is independent of other choices, and will be analyzed separately. Numbers will be available for disposal analysis, but it will be hard to get numbers from the private sector for the public/private analysis. Private companies currently charge the same rates as the county, and have been reluctant to share cost information. The division will meet with haulers soon to find out what information they will provide. This analysis will tie back into the policy questions of what is important when choosing between public and private options.

Bellevue commented that part of the benefit of doing the analysis is discovering where there are holes in the data, and added that the components of each scenario are variables. Bellevue said it will be satisfied with the analysis if it addresses each of the variables.

The division announced that an on-call work order contract has been signed with RW Beck, the company responsible for the City of Seattle's design/build Tolt River treatment plant project. RW Beck will assist the division with the public/private analysis. The contract includes subcontractors with expertise in rail, marine, and transport.

The division suggested a work program for the next two months:

October – forecast and disposal analyses, begin development of transfer options

November – continue work on transfer options, complete public/private analysis

ITSG discussed the “Organics Scenario” presented by Bellevue. The division said it has already begun to examine that option by asking whether the division has the authority to implement it. If the answer is yes, the next step would be to follow up in the comp plan. Redmond commented that even if the answer is no, it may be worthwhile to make an effort towards statutory changes to allow the option.

IV. Public/Private Matrix

Redmond suggested that the public/private matrix developed for the third milestone report should be considered background information, and solid waste staff should identify policy issues raised from the matrix and develop recommendations that should be presented to MSWMAC in October. The division stated that it would like to review the matrix with the haulers to clear up inconsistencies. Upon further review of the matrix the division realized that the private sector would largely be required to conform to public sector requirements because of procurement practices, as well as the impacts of bargaining agreements and state laws. These were not fully considered when the matrix was created. The differences between public and private options are diminished by public contracting requirements.

ITSG agreed the division would use the matrix to develop a document which identifies policy issues and makes recommendations, for ITSG review at their next meeting and that will be presented to MSWMAC in October. ITSG agreed cities will submit any additional considerations for the matrix by Tuesday, September 13, so that the division can begin work.

V. Next Steps

ITSG will meet on Wednesday, October 5, from 10-12 at King Street Center.

The division will develop a timeline and outline, as requested by MSWMAC and ITSG, to clarify the planning process and how work will proceed in the remaining time for Milestone Report #4 and the final waste export plan.