

**Solid Waste Interjurisdictional Technical Staff Work Group**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**April 26, 2006**  
**King Street Center**

**Meeting Attendees:**

City Staff:

Tom Spille – City of Bellevue  
Alison Bennett – 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  
Valarie Jarvi – City of Woodinville  
Amy Ensminger – City of Woodinville

County Staff:

Mike Huddleston – Council Staff  
Beth Mountsier – Council Staff  
Jeff Gaisford - SWD  
Josh Marx – SWD  
Kevin Kiernan - SWD  
Diane Yates - SWD  
Theresa Koppang - SWD  
Gemma Alexander - SWD  
Geraldine Cole - SWD  
Alexandra Thompson - SWD

**I. Review March 29 Minutes**

Everyone present introduced themselves. ITSG approved the March 8 minutes.

**II. Siting Plan**

Engineering Services Manager Kevin Kiernan presented a draft Siting Plan. At its last meeting, MSWMAC received a presentation on the division's siting process that included the regulatory basis of, and Comp Plan guidelines for, siting solid waste facilities. The draft Siting Plan is an edited version of the siting plan from the 89/92 Comp Plan, with landfill siting criteria removed. The draft plan addresses the major facility types-transfer/materials recovery (MRF), intermodal, and waste to energy (WTE). The description of intermodal facilities says that co-location is an option. The criteria for co-located facilities are the same as those for transfer and intermodal facilities, but would be weighted differently. The facility types are followed by siting criteria based on State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) categories. Page 12 addresses equitable distribution of facilities, and has been changed to include up-to-date legislative references. The draft plan also addresses public process, which involves establishing a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) drawn from the service area. The CAC weighs the criteria that are then applied to potential sites for screening.

Nina Rivkin asked if the Waste to Energy briefing sponsored by Councilmember Lambert provided any new information that would affect the Siting Plan. Intergovernmental Relations Liaison Diane Yates replied that the proponents said they had a site but did not identify that site. In response to another question, she said that two of the speakers were vendors and the third was a retired public official from Germany. ITSG discussed Waste to Energy in detail. Current King County policy bars WTE. Changes to the Comp Plan and County Code would be required for WTE to be pursued. Kiernan said that there are competing opinions on the technical and environmental merits of Waste to Energy versus landfilling. ITSG considered that questions remain about air emissions, feedstock control issues, management of ash and the economics of energy production. Spokane's experience with WTE indicates that operating costs could be very high. In the recent presentation, WTE disposal fees were compared to current tipping fees, rather than current disposal fees. ITSG concluded that despite serious doubts about WTE, the

question should be treated seriously and fully evaluated. It was suggested that the division give a follow up presentation to RPC, recapping the contents of the briefing, history, context and any additional information learned by the division.

MSWMAC will be asked to adopt the Siting Plan at its May 12 meeting. ITSG members are asked to submit their comments before then.

### **III. Third Party Review**

Yates said that MSWMAC Chair Jean Garber asked her to send an email to MSWMAC soliciting questions for the third party review. She would like to include some questions suggested by ITSG in that email.

Because the division is not involved in the third party review, council staff Mike Huddleston led the discussion. He said council wants to maintain a narrow scope for the review, with questions limited to topics of disagreement and topics that would have profound impacts on the system if their analysis was incorrect.

ITSG generated a list of topics that should be considered for inclusion in the third party review. In some cases, specific questions were developed.

- Recycling assumptions and issues
- Waste to Energy
- Financial, including general financial assumptions and bond terms as they relate to interlocal agreements and Cedar Hills' closure date  
*Question: What is an acceptable lifecycle cost for depreciating capital costs for solid waste facilities?*
- Early export and the sensitivity analysis, including the point at which early export becomes cost effective
- Long haul transport, including railroad negotiations
- Self haul issues, including service levels, effects on design standards and financial impacts of providing self haul service and analysis of a surcharge  
ITSG considered two approaches to this topic. One was to question whether self haul service should be provided. The other was to consider a surcharge to recover the incremental cost of providing self haul service. ITSG agreed the latter approach is more likely to be productive.
- Privatization  
Alison Bennett of Bellevue will provide a specific question(s) for this topic.
- Waste export procurement process  
This topic could be difficult because procurement is highly regulated by state law, requiring very careful selection of the expert who will address the question.

Yates will send a summary of the suggestions to ITSG by Friday. She suggested ITSG could send specific questions to council staff or directly to MSWMAC in the next few days. ITSG decided that it would be better to continue to have Yates forward materials from ITSG to MSWMAC. Yates will send the email with ITSG's specific questions to MSWMAC on Friday, May 5.

#### **IV. Rate Study**

Assistant Division Director Geraldine Cole said the division is an enterprise fund. Ninety-four percent of its revenues come from tipping fees. The other 6% comes from grants, interest and miscellaneous income. The tipping fee is based on the division's actual operating cost. The division is currently looking at a three year rate of around \$95 per ton, beginning in 2008. A three year rate will be proposed instead of annual increases for two reasons. First, the public prefers stable prices. Second, council does not like to vote for multiple rate increases.

The division currently has a per ton tipping fee. The Comp Plan discusses another rate structure that will be included in the rate study as an option. It would be a two part rate composed of transaction and tonnage components. There would be a flat charge for each transaction and then a somewhat lower per ton fee for the garbage. For instance, a \$6 transaction fee could result in a \$2 decrease in the per ton tipping fee. The effect of this rate structure is to allocate more of the costs to customers who cost the most to serve, those who bring in small loads. Customers bringing small loads cost more to serve because they do not have charge accounts and require more attention at the scale house; they require more assistance and direction from transfer station operators on the tipping floor, and take longer to unload than commercial haulers take to unload large loads. These transaction costs will be used to develop a transaction component to the disposal fee that will result in somewhat higher cost on a per ton basis for small loads. The total tonnage and the total revenue collected would not change. There is no evidence that rate increases cause illegal dumping.

The division's rate is the lowest in the region, and will continue to be so with the proposed rate increase. Huddleston mentioned council may ask why wait until 2008 if there is agreement about the Waste Export System Plan and transfer station capital improvements. Players change so there may be different elected officials in the future years from those who will make decisions on solid waste system. A substantial portion of the rate is reserves to cover Cedar Hills Landfill after closure, and is linked to the closure date. The division can calculate the rate based on different closure dates. The longer Cedar Hills remains open, the lower the rate will be because disposal at Cedar Hills is cheaper than waste export.

In response to a question, Cole said the haulers will divert their trucks from First NE transfer station to Snohomish County during construction. However, that waste will not be exported. Division trucks will take waste from Snohomish County to Cedar Hills. The haulers will pay Snohomish County's tipping fee, the division will pay the haulers the difference between King County's tipping fee and Snohomish County's tipping fee. The division will also pay the haulers mitigation for their drivers' extra time.

#### **V. Recycling**

Recycling and Environmental Services Manager Jeff Gaisford said the division is gathering data that will help in the Comp Plan process. Two studies are regularly performed – the Customer Demographic Survey and the Customer Satisfaction Survey. This year questions have been added to gauge price sensitivity of recycling behaviors. The Recycling Customer Survey is new this year, and is intended to find out who uses recycling services at the transfer stations, and why. The division maintains expenditure

and revenue data to provide recycling services at its transfer stations. The Material Recovery Facility (MRF) Assessment will quantify and characterize material that moves through MRFs that serve King County.

ITSG discussed the relationship between recycling and the Waste Export System Plan. Improvements in the recycling rate will not alter the scale of the solid waste system or affect the need for transfer capacity. ITSG also agreed that there is confusion about recycling goals and assumptions, and how they relate to the forecast and the Waste Export System Plan. Current recycling goals are included in the existing Comp Plan. ITSG is currently scheduled to discuss setting new goals for the Comp Plan update in July. The tonnage forecast is based on the assumption that the recycling rate will not change. The forecast presentation given by Alexander Rist at an earlier ITSG meeting showed that a higher recycling rate (e.g., 60%) would not remove the need for additional transfer capacity. New recycling goals and programs would be required to achieve a recycling rate of 60% or higher.

In response to a question, Gaisford said electronics are included in the division's studies. The new electronics recycling law will go into effect in 2009, so there is time to develop implementation strategies.

#### **VI. Comp Plan Kickoff Meeting**

Lead Planner Theresa Koppang said an electronic save the date card has been sent to the cities. She said the kickoff meeting is an opportunity to invite cities to become involved in MSWMAC and give them a cursory introduction to the Comp Plan's contents and process of development. Based on input from ITSG, the agenda has been abbreviated to 2 hours followed by a one hour open house.

The division asked for volunteers to speak for ten minutes about the cities' accomplishments under the current Comp Plan at the kickoff meeting. At the recycling workshop last summer Bellevue and Auburn presented their cities' recycling systems. Yates asked Issaquah staff if they could give a short presentation on city programs, but they did not have staff available on June 9. In the absence of volunteers, Yates said she would phone cities to find a speaker.

Desmond Machuca of SeaTac commented that there is a disconnect between the tipping fee and the rates in cities' contracts with the haulers for curbside service.

#### **VII. Next Steps**

Rivkin said she would like to review the work schedule for the next few months at the next meeting because she found gaps in the existing calendars. Rivkin agreed to forward the calendar she developed to ITSG.

ITSG agreed to meet on May 10 to discuss the calendar, the relationship between recycling and the Waste Export System Plan, and to finish discussion of the third party review.

Gaisford agreed to bring a summary of existing recycling policies and goals to that meeting.