

**Technical Subcommittee  
Meeting Notes  
August 18, 2004  
King Street Center**

**Meeting Attendees:**

City Staff:

Jim Arndt – City of Kirkland  
Alison Bennett – City of Bellevue  
Rika Cecil – City of Shoreline  
Sharon Conroy – City of Auburn  
Rob VanOrsow – City of Federal Way  
Rick Watson – City of Bellevue

County Staff:

Mark Buscher - Solid Waste Division  
Peggy Dorothy – Council Staff  
Theresa Jennings – Solid Waste Division  
Kevin Kiernan – Solid Waste Division  
Mike Reed – Council Staff  
Diane Yates – Solid Waste Division

Guests:

Jeff Kelley-Clarke – Snohomish County  
Solid Waste

**Introductions and Announcements**

Theresa Jennings announced that Mark Buscher has accepted a position with the Wastewater Treatment Division as manager of the I&I (Inflow and Infiltration) Project and will be leaving the Solid Waste Division in early September. Kevin Kiernan will be continuing the work with the cities until Mark's position is filled. The division is interested in having a city representative on the interview panel.

Buscher said he has enjoyed working in the Solid Waste Division and will miss the people. He does look forward to continuing to work with the cities on wastewater issues.

**Snohomish County Transfer System Siting Experience**

Snohomish County Solid Waste Division Manager Jeff Kelley-Clarke discussed their experience trying to site new stations and upgrade existing stations.

- 1975: Two transfer stations built: one station built on site of old landfill; another was built in Mountlake Terrace. These stations were built to handle 200 to 300 tons/day. By the 90s they were handling 900 tons/day. Both were designed and built by Rod Hansen.
- 1980: The county built a landfill in Cathcart, which operated for 12 years.
- 1988: Transfer station built in Arlington.
- 1990 Comp Plan adopted: Goals contained in Comp Plan were to replace the station in Everett, build a new facility in eastern part of the county, accommodate growth in population, and divert 40 percent of the tonnage that had been going directly to the landfill.
- 1992: County closes the Cathcart landfill and transitions to waste export.
- Mid 1990s: Several landfills still operating in Snohomish County that were owned and operated by the towns and cities. The landfills were at capacity and the cities and county worked together to close them. The

County opened five drop boxes and began siting process for two new transfer stations.

- 1994: Lease on City of Everett property expired. The City did not wish to renew the lease.

New stations were not built in time for Cathcart landfill's closure. So, the county changed the division's operating rules and limited hours self haulers could use the stations. The county went through a siting process for a new station that would replace its Everett transfer station. A conditional use permit was approved for a new facility off of Highway 9. Citizens opposed the proposed location and that project was ultimately cancelled.

In 1993 the County undertook an extensive public process to site two new transfer stations. It formed a Citizens Advisory Committee that included representatives from the county, cities, and citizens, including environmentalists and tribes. It included those opposed to some of the proposals. The committee started selecting sites that met the basic criteria. Some committee members tried to write in criteria that would throw particular sites out. At the beginning of the process there were 150 potential sites. All but three were eliminated. Citizen representatives were then selected from those three communities. None of the three sites were good choices because they were all in residential areas. There was also a potential site at Paine Field, but the county had problems getting the FAA to understand that a transfer station differs from a landfill.

At the end of the siting process, the county council didn't approve any of the sites and the process ended. Had the Division known the outcome of the public process, it probably would have opted to try to keep its site in Everett. However, the County and Everett ended up in court.

The county finally decided to build a new station on the existing Mountlake Terrace station property in spite of fact that it didn't comply with a number of the transfer station siting criteria including size (it is only five acres) and its location in a residential area.

The Division then worked with its SWAC to evaluate the sites for a new station. This worked well because SWAC understood the system. Having the right people at the table is very important. SWAC settled on the Paine Field site for the new station and the county was eventually successful in getting the FAA's agreement to build at Paine Field.

The county designed the facilities for 20 years, but will, in fact, be operating at these locations 50 years from now. Services are uniform throughout the system. Recycling is offered at every station and hours are now the same for self haulers and commercial haulers.

In response to a question about criteria used to determine if a station is over capacity, Kelley-Clark responded that it is a complicated calculus. When Snohomish County's facilities that were built for 200 to 300 tons/day were receiving upwards of 900 tons/day, the haulers average wait times were 20 to 25 minutes, with wait times of an hour or more at peak times. The haulers' standard for turnaround time in Snohomish County is ten minutes. With the amount of tonnage being received on a regular basis, traffic - including commercial trucks - was backing out onto surrounding streets. Trash compactors can handle 90 to 100 tons/hour, so we were still comfortable processing 800 tons/day. But you also have to factor in down time for maintenance or breakdowns. You can change hours but that complicates things.

There were several lessons learned from this process:

1. Easier to rebuild stations on existing sites than to find new sites.
2. Avoid residential areas, if possible.
3. Solve traffic problems.
4. Spend the extra money in order to add scales to get people in and out quickly and build fully enclosed transfer buildings.
5. In retrospect, we designed public process for failure. It was just too bogged down in negativity. No one wants a transfer station in their community. First, find some workable sites and base public process on those. Then select people for your public process who are willing to make choices. While second public process with SWAC was 'less aggressive' public process, the county was not criticized for it because SWAC membership does include all the cities, citizen representatives and the haulers.

Kelley-Clark expressed the importance of both counties having a network of transfer stations. He suggested the group take a tour of Snohomish County's Paine Field and Mountlake Terrace Transfer Stations. He will get Diane a photo of one of their enclosed buildings to share with the group.

### **What a Transfer Station Does**

Engineering Services Manager Kevin Kiernan referenced EPA's manual on Waste Transfer Stations at pages 22 and 23. The station design depicted in Figures 2 and 3 is King County's Enumclaw Transfer Station.

Kiernan suggested that the group may want to also discuss what a transfer station doesn't do at some point.

To-date uniform services have been provided throughout the system with the exceptions of the Algona Transfer Station, where recycling isn't provided due to site constraints, and the Factoria Transfer Station, where free primary recyclables collection was eliminated in order to provide room for permanent Household Hazardous Waste collection. Since curbside collection of primary recyclables is

widely available we felt comfortable making that change. We discussed the change with Bellevue staff and they were comfortable with the decision as well.

Right now the Division's intention is to provide yard waste recycling services at all new stations. First Northeast Transfer Station is in design phase for renovation and yard waste collection will be provided there.

In prior Comp Plan development processes we've asked the question about whether or not to continue having uniformity throughout the system and the answer has always been yes. Now is the time to look at that policy and see if we want to change it.

Interest was expressed in looking at providing different services at different stations.

First and foremost, transfer stations provide disposal service to commercial haulers and the general public. It's more efficient to serve the commercial haulers since they bring in larger loads and know how to get through facility faster. However, serving the general public is important too. They bring in smaller loads and bulky items. For a large urban area, we currently offer a high level of service.

"Self hauler" is a broad category. It's not just single passenger vehicles. It includes Boeing and the 1-800-Junk folks. Landscape companies also self haul their waste and have charge accounts with the Division. The Division has data and can distinguish between the self hauler in the single passenger vehicle and the business self hauler. We can provide information on top ten customers at each facility.

Eighty-eight to 90 percent of self haulers are single passenger vehicles. Ninety-five percent are cash customers. Many self haulers have curbside service. Even the City of Seattle, which has mandatory service, has two busy transfer stations that serve residential self haulers as well as commercial haulers. Mandatory service and self haul activity have nothing to do with one another. However, one way mandatory service might work would be if people were charged one fee and could set out any amount of garbage at the curb.

It's also possible to discourage self hauling through the fees charged at the transfer station. Right now we have a per ton fee. But it is possible to charge a transaction fee plus a weight-based fee. It is also important to note that disposal drives self haul activity at the transfer stations, not recycling services.

Another important point is that when you're looking at constructing new transfer buildings, tonnage drives building needs and traffic drives the queuing needs. While in the future technology could make it possible to compact twice as much as is currently compacted, road weight and rail car limits still have to be met.

### **Transfer System Questions for Analysis**

Mark Buscher discussed the map showing where tonnage is coming from and where it is going. The map is based on July '04 data. There is a strong correlation between where commercial and self haulers are coming from.

If the decision is made to site a new station, it is important to remember that travel time between collection routes and the transfer station is an important criterion to the haulers.

Some suggestions for transfer station level of standards were handed out. The subcommittee needs to think about what services the system should provide in advance of next week's meeting.

While it would be possible to site a transfer station at the landfill when it closes, a new permit would be needed.

#### **Information to be provided at next meeting:**

- Average weekend tonnage per hour by transfer station for January – July 2004

#### **Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, August 25, 10 a.m. to noon, King Street Center.