

SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)



July 2, 2025, Meeting Summary
5:30 am – 7:30 am

Chair: Aleema Gray
Co-Chair: Joe Camero
Secretary: Melanie Coerver

Committee Members	Present	SPU Staff /Guests	Role
Joe Camero	Y	Casey Colley	SPU – SWAC Program Coordinator
Melanie Coerver	Y	Katie Swanson	SPU
Tareq Fayyad	Y	Sally Hulsman	SPU
Aleema Gray	Y	Fatima Krubally	SPU Administrative Staff Analyst
Caitlin Singer	Y	Katie Jerauld	Guest-Ecology
Lisa Watkins	N	McKenna M	SPU
Alissa Campbell	Y		
Erin Gagnon	N		
Paige Madden	N		
Chelsey Evans	Y		
Yongkang (YK) Zhou	Y		
Karia Wong	Y		

1. Introductions and Icebreaker

2. Review and Approve May Meeting Minutes Aleema Gray, SWAC Chair

- Approved

3. SPU Solid Waste Contracts Sally Hulsman

Long Haul Disposal Contract

- WM provides the rail containers.
- The transfer station does heavy hauling of garbage to Argo and organics to Cedar Grove.

Recycling Contract

- The city contracts directly for recycle, paying a part time processing fee and receiving a credit for the value.
- This approach is different from suburban jurisdictions but similar to larger cities. Smaller cities bundle services and one of the haulers handles collection, negotiation, and disposal.

RFP Phase

- Questions were sent to the community and answers were received from vendors in the recycling industry (MRFs, manufacturing equipment manufacturers). Questions included: auditing of material, commodities to introduce, technology in a MRF, recovery rate for materials.
- The RFI and answers are public. • The RFP (request for proposals) was prepared based upon the RFI responses.
- The evaluation/selection process will end October 31st. Contract signing and approval will include negotiations.
- A year of service preparation will be offered before the contract goes live in 2027.

Union Pacific and Glass

- Union Pacific now transports a lot of glass to California, offering flexibility.
- The new contract needs to allow for adjustments due to new technologies or market changes.

Upcoming Contracts

- A disposal contract is coming up in 2028, and a collections contract in 2029, with potential extensions up to 2033.
- SPU wants to define the requirements for the next disposal and collections contracts. The goal is to create contracts that meet Seattle's needs, are competitive in rates, and environmentally sound.
- Assessments include baseline assessment, benchmarking, options analysis, and recommendations.

Barging and Landfills

- Barging is a potential option for disposal due to landfill limitations. Many municipalities have their own landfills, but these have completion dates.
- King County is trying to extend the life of its landfill, but new landfills are unlikely. Once landfills reach their limit, the only option is train transport.
- Waste Connections is considering building barges to transport waste to a landfill across the Columbia River Gorge in Oregon.

Glass Collection

- A separate container for glass could be considered.
- Glass is problematic in mixed recycling because it's dirty and damages machinery.
- Many MRFs now remove glass at the beginning of the process.

Recycle Reform Act

- The EPR legislation (Recycle Reform Act) will offer reimbursements for recycling costs. It may change what and how things are recycled and how recycling appears on bills.
- Recycling is not free, but the cost is embedded to encourage participation.
- There is a possibility of people opting into different bin sizes.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

- The city of Seattle recycles 80,000 tons a year and will be reimbursed for all of that amount.
- One of the requirements is that the city has to show what that means across all of our customer base.
- EPR has passed for electronics, covering items like monitors, laptops, tablets, and phones.
- Recycling and disposal costs for covered electronics are paid for by a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO).
- Textiles are a potential addition in the next contract, possibly through a pilot program.

Potential Recycling Solutions

- Considering a larger collection area, similar to smaller cities/towns, instead of special boxes.
- Turning the old south transfer station into a big recycling center is a possibility, but there is not enough space to build a MRF (Material Recovery Facility).

Incineration vs. Barging

- Barging is becoming more common because trains are becoming competitive for space and waste.
- Waste Connections is building a barge to transport garbage down the Columbia River to their landfill, as the Pierce County landfill is closing.
- Incineration is not publicly appreciated and would be costly and politically challenging to implement.

Director's Rule and Operational Challenges

- SPU, WM, and Recology aim to pick up all accumulated garbage after a storm without charging extra.
- Transfer stations must remain open seven days a week.

- Challenges arise in summer when routes are partially completed due to heat (e.g., 75% covered before 100-degree heat).
- Recology and WM must then pick up 125% the next day, which is difficult.
- Recycle is every other week, so you could be a month out if you miss a week.
- Escalations in the contact center are high during delays due to customer misunderstanding.

Wrap-up and Feedback

- There are many contracts expiring at different times.
- Feedback is wanted on the special item promotion.
- Feedback can be sent to the director, Sally Hulsman.

4. Solid Waste Amendments

- Aleema sent a letter to Council member Joy Hollingsworth last month (or in May).
- Angela briefed Council member Hollingsworth, who acknowledged the letter and expressed support.
- The amendments will go to committee and then to full council, with a decision expected in about two months

5. SWAC Recruitment Update

- There are five people to be recommended to the CEO and GM for approval to join SWAC.
- This would bring SWAC to a full 15 members.
- Communications are expected to go out tomorrow, with the goal of reaching out to candidates by mid- to late July.
- Joe, as vice chair, will step in as interim chair until the officer election in December.

6. SWAC Tours

- North Transfer Station tour will be booked for the fall.

7. August SWAC Meeting

- An August virtual ad hoc meeting will include onboarding information for new members.
- Katie will provide an overview of the 2024 Waste Prevention Recycling report.
- The goal is for everyone to be familiar with the material by the September meeting to formulate questions, comments, and recommendations

8. SWAC Comments

- Pacific Northwest Climate Week is coming up in about two weeks.
- There are many events happening all over town, covering various subjects, including circularity.

9. Public Comments

- Ecology has been working on a new designated recyclables list workbook with recommendations on what Ecology has looked into for recycling.
- Ecology recently updated the organics recycling collection area webpage with helpful information.
- Materials are being developed for the Recycling Reform Act, including a four-page summary with important details.
- Questions about the Recycling Reform Act can be emailed to recyclingreform@ecy.wa.gov.
- If anyone thinks of things for Climate Week or other things that were forgotten, send them in an email. The speaker will send out an email with bullets of different conversation pieces