



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

December 3, 2014 Meeting notes
 Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue

Room 5965

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Co-Chair: Heather Levy

Co-Chair: Wendy Walker

Committee Members & CAC Staff	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Dan Corum	Y	Gabriella Uhlar-Heffner	SPU Presenter, Construction & Demolition Waste
David Della	N	Vas Duggirala	SPU Presenter, Rates & Finance
Ben Grace	Y		
Katie Kennedy	N		
Heather Levy	Y		
Erika Melroy	N		
Rodney Proctor	Y		
Joseph Ringold	N		
Stephanie Schwenger	Y		
Chris Toman	Y		
Wendy Walker	N		
Heidi Fischer, CAC Program Support	Y		
Dick Lilly, Policy Liaison	Y		
Sheryl Shapiro, Program Manager	Y		

PLEASE NOTE ACTION ITEMS ARE ✓ MARKED AND HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW

1) Regular Business

- Committee members and guests went around the table and introduced themselves.

Ben Grace and Rodney Proctor were welcomed as are new members.

2) Presentation: Construction and Demolition (C&D)Materials Ban & Waste Diversion Plan Requirements, Gabriella Uhlar-Heffner, SPU

- Construction and demolition waste is separated into three categories:
 - Recycling – materials separated for reuse or recycling
 - Beneficial use – clean wood (unpainted and untreated) to hog fuel or industrial boiler fuel
 - Disposal – material permanently placed in a landfill.
 - SPU also counts the waste that is used to make both alternate daily cover (ADC), which covers the active face of a landfill instead of soil, and industrial waste stabilizer (IWS), which provides structure in special landfills, as disposal, since they are ending up in a landfill. Many municipalities count these materials as recycling or beneficial use.
- The City has a contracted hauler for non-recyclable C&D waste – Waste Management.
- Most C&D waste is self-hauled by homeowners and construction and demolition contractors.
- There are also many “third party” recycling container services.
 - These require the materials collected to be 90% or more recyclable.
- Seattle C&D generation has numerous end market destinations, including places for salvage and reuse, source separated recyclers, mixed C&D recyclers, and private solid waste transfer stations.
 - In Seattle those transfer stations are Republic, Waste Management, and WM Railheads.
- C&D generation dropped off in 2009 and 2010 due to the recession, but is now at about the same level it was in 2007.
- Concrete is a large part of C&D generation and recycling.
 - 95% of concrete is recycled.
 - With concrete, 61.8% of C&D generation is recycled; if you remove concrete, only 23% of C&D generation is recycled.
- Most clean wood in the C&D generation stream is diverted to beneficial use, but so far, not recycling.
- Clean gypsum is recycled at 85% because we have a gypsum manufacturer in Seattle.
- Metals are recycled at 72%, which is unusual because the national average for metal recycling is in the 90% range.
 - Metal has a high value.
 - The policy liaison stated that metal recyclers often underreport quantities. The EPA may take this into account when estimating the national rate.
- Asphalt roofing recycling decreased in 2013 despite doing outreach and having available recyclers.
- Carpet recycling is also down in 2013.
 - Manufacturers have provided only minimal support for recycling programs.
- Seattle’s C&D recycling goal is 70% by 2020.
 - Many of the recycling ordinances are implemented through director’s rules.
 - A recent proposed director’s rule would keep the recycling requirement for clean wood on schedule for 2015 but delay the disposal ban on tear-off asphalt roofing shingles until July 2015, and plastic film wrap and carpet until 2016.
- C&D recycling facility certification is complicated.
 - We want to receive annual reports from source separated recyclers, and monthly reports from mixed C&D recyclers.
 - We also want to do quarterly samples of the residual for the mixed C&D recyclers, and sampling must meet the standard of less than 10% of the materials we are targeting for recycling.
 - Source separated recyclers must have at least 90% recycling, and mixed C&D recyclers must have 75% recycling for many LEED and Built Green Projects.
- Waste Diversion Reporting is being done to assess whether projects with a building permit are recycling targeted construction materials.

- SPU has sent out 1100 notifications requiring this information from permit holders and has received 300 reports due to difficulties in early 2014 in getting the word out about the new requirement to building permit applicants.

Some Questions and Comments from the Committee

- Question: How do you explain the jump in recycling from 2007 to now?
 - Answer: We don't have a specific metric on it, but we've done a lot of outreach and are hopeful that has had some impact. We've worked through trade associations and with recycling facilities, and it's cheaper to recycle some materials now than to dispose of them.
- Question: Is there any change from 2007 in what materials are accepted for recycling?
 - Answer: Yes, a lot more kinds of materials are taken now, but capacity varies. Some facilities have closed, and some commodities are more or less in demand.
- Question: How much of the C&D generation is commercial?
 - Answer: The numbers presented here don't distinguish between kinds of construction, and include both residential and commercial.
- Question: How much does construction waste contribute to the overall waste stream?
 - Answer: Some construction waste is disposed of in curbside collection containers and self-hauled to city transfer stations and so is counted as part of the overall municipal solid waste (MSW) generation. The MSW generation (recycling and disposal) in 2013 is calculated by SPU to total 724,383 tons. However, most construction waste is managed separately; in 2013, this was an additional 396,380 tons generated in the City and managed through private transfer stations and recyclers – this is not counted as MSW for City's planning purposes but tracked separately .
- Question: There was less C&D waste disposed in 2013 than in 2007?
 - Answer: Yes
- Question: Can clean wood recycling rates improve?
 - Answer: Yes, 55% is diverted, but 22% is currently going to a landfill. Even though we are ahead of most of the nation at 55%, a reasonable target could be 80% diverted. We need to develop more of a non-fuel end market. A panel board product made of plastic film and wood chips to be a composite siding product was in the works. A lot of money was invested by industry but ultimately it wasn't launched. The main emerging market for diverting "dirty" plastic film wrap is to convert it into crude oil. Waste Management had a pilot program in Portland but it just closed.
- Comment: Since the amount of carpet waste is comparatively low when compared with other kinds of construction waste, it may not be an area to focus on right now.
 - Response: Yes, other things have more volume, such as clean wood and asphalt roofing.
- Question: Are you soliciting comments about the recent proposed Director's Rule?
 - Answer: Yes, if the committee would like to send comments that's fine. The rule would keep the clean wood disposal ban on schedule for January 2015, and delay the bans for tear off asphalt and carpet and plastic film wrap, due to continuing significant uncertainties in current regional markets for recycling and beneficial use of those particular materials. A notice of the proposed rule has been sent to roofers, haulers, and others who are will be affected for feedback.

- Question: Is a six month delay long enough to resolve the uncertainties surrounding the regional markets for tear-off asphalt shingles?
 - Answer: A lot of progress been made with engineers at public agencies, and there are good examples for uses and a lot of interest. Facilities were developing stockpiles last year because the products were not moving fast enough, but we think that will be different in 2015.
- Question: What is the condition of concrete when it's recycled, and how many times can it be recycled?
 - Answer: The concrete is crushed and any rebar is removed. Crushed, recycled concrete is often used in making new concrete, and it's often reused onsite. The re-use happens locally because concrete is too heavy to ship economically. There are some pH issues with crushed concrete, so you can't use a high percentage of it in some situations (for example, near a waterway).

The Committee may want to invite Gabrielle back for more questions. The Committee can also contact her by email.

3) Proposed Solid Waste Rate Increase, Vas Duggirala, SPU

- A four year rate period (2013 – 2016) was used to transition SPU to one rate study per year. The four year rate period included a provision for a mid-term adjustment for 2015-2016 if there were significant changes to the underlying assumptions.
 - Economic recovery was slower than expected; didn't hit full stride until 2014.
 - Construction costs for the North Transfer Station went up by \$10 million dollars after it moved past the design options phase.
 - SPU gets a portion of the revenue from recycling commodities, and the market for paper recycling has decreased significantly.
 - SPU was earning \$3 million dollars annually, and is now receiving only \$800,000-\$900,000.
 - With the closing of the North Transfer Station, we expected that people would use the South Transfer station. Instead, many of them are using King County's Shoreline Transfer Station, resulting in a loss of revenue for SPU.
 - We are trying to recover revenue from the closed North Transfer Station by expanding the service hours of the South Transfer Station.
 - A new, stronger Debt Service Coverage policy passed by City Council in April 2014 protects the Solid Waste Fund Bond rating and ensures lower borrowing costs for infrastructure investment, but also does not give SPU credit for city taxes and establishes a minimum debt service ratio of 1.5 (adjusted net revenue times annual debt service).
- The Seattle City Council approved the new rates on December 1, 2014.
- For 2015, the new rate increase is 5.9%, which will increase each customer bill by about 70 cents.
- Effective date of rate changes was moved from January to April.

Some Questions and Comments from the Committee

- Question: To what size of waste containers do these rates apply?
 - Answer: 32 gallon garbage bin, and 96 gallon recycling bin.
- Question: Did the paper recycling market decrease coincide with the Seattle PI going out of print?

- Answer: Markets are global, so it could be that something happened in China, as well as here. When we closed the North Transfer station for rebuilding, most customers went to King County's Shoreline station instead of SPU's South Transfer station, so we lost that revenue but may be able to get it back when the North station re-opens.
- Question: So when doing the rate study for 2014, the assumption was that losses would not be as great, and that traffic would go to South Transfer, not Shoreline, because legally garbage is not supposed to be taken out of the city?
 - Answer: There is a flow control restriction, and you are not supposed to take garbage out of city. However, you can take recycling and compost out of the city.
- Question: How does this rate increase relate to SPU's Strategic Business Plan?
 - Answer: The planned rate increase just got bumped forward, so smaller rate increases are planned going forward, so that we can maintain an average increase of 4.6%, as set forth in the Strategic Business Plan.
- Question: Is the Solid Waste Division looking at ways to stabilize the rates to avoid having increases each year? With conservation being the focus and revenues based on generation, how is that tension resolved for sustainability?
 - Answer: The solid waste fund's biggest driver of rate increases is building transfer stations, and our last building should be complete in 2017. After that, we have to plan for inflation on our contracts, which was less than 2% in the past year, and long term is projected at approximately 2-3% a year. Rate increases should be closer to approximately 2% or less annually if inflation is the only thing for which we have to adjust.

We do charge for organics (composting), and getting people to recycle and compost is cheaper for SPU than sending it to the landfill. So if people generate less garbage, while it will reduce revenue somewhat, it should also save money.
- Question: What was the Council vote on this rate increase?
 - Answer: 8 members voted yes, 1 abstained.
- Question: The new North Transfer Station should open again in 2016?
 - Answer: Yes, that is the current plan.

4) Washington Organics Recycling Council Conference, Dan Corum, SWAC member

- The conference lasted one day and had about 110 people attending.
- Two different ways of managing organics were explored: aerobic processing and anaerobic processing, as well as a combination of the two. Discussion included examples of municipalities' compost programs successes and challenges.
 - The City of Portland had trouble with their organic processor and their compost program was ultimately closed. They may have been trying to expand the program too quickly, and were unable to manage the incoming material.
 - The Policy Liaison noted that Portland is sometimes used as an example of what can't be done in organics processing, but what's at issue are specific policy choices. The compost plant may have been too close to an urban area, and a cascading series of issues left them with only one place for food waste. Portland's issues are not unique. Nationally, compost is mostly a cottage industry; the infrastructure isn't yet in place for many urban areas to introduce food waste and packaging.
 - Tight zoning has made siting a compost facility difficult.

- Harvest Power in British Columbia runs a huge anaerobic digestion and composting facility. They work with collectors to reduce contamination, and they produce electricity and methane gas.

5) Review & Reflections on the Past Year

Since there is only a small group present now that has been in SWAC throughout the year, the Committee Co-Chair proposed that this issue be tabled for now and sent out as a survey by email.

- ✓ The Program Manager explained that she will be creating a survey for members of all the Community Advisory Committees (CACs) soon, and she will connect with the SWAC Secretary about this over email to arrange a time to collaborate.

6) 2015 Further Work Plan Development

- At the last meeting, SWAC grouped workplan items into four categories: 1) SPU Policy-Related Initiatives; 2) SWAC Admin & Governance; 3) SWAC Education & Development; 4) SWAC Outreach & Engagement.
- The Draft 2015 Work Plan is organized chronologically.
- With regard to Item #3, Solid Waste Tonnage Updates, the SWAC Policy Liaison has been sending these to the committee monthly by email.
 - There haven't been any big changes in the reports.
 - The Committee would like to continue receiving these reports monthly, and consider quarterly whether to discuss the reports as an agenda item at the meetings.
 - ✓ May want to put this on the January agenda.
- With regard to Item #4, Officer Elections, last year they weren't held until March or April, but for 2015 the committee will be back on schedule with the elections in January.
 - The term length for officers is not in the CAC charter. The Program Manager suggested considering where members are in their two year term of service when electing officers, and adds that the Community Advisory Committees Charter will be revised and updated in the first quarter of 2015.
- With regard to Item #5, Implementation of Composting Requirement, the Policy Liaison suggested postponing from January to February to allow ample time to gather meaningful feedback.
 - ✓ The Policy Liaison added that he will speak to the Solid Waste Division Director about giving SWAC a report on 2015's strategic outlook in January.
- With regard to Item #7, SWAC Outreach and Engagement Plan, a new Committee member asked about whether and how often subcommittees are organized.
 - The Co-Chair responded that the Secretary does the letter writing for the Committee, and subcommittees haven't been used a lot recently, but we may want to consider one for outreach planning. The new committee member agreed.
 - Another Committee member noted that a larger outreach strategy could be helpful in creating a commitment for a concrete plan of action.
 - The Committee agreed that they need a decided approach which would include identifying the tools, guidelines, key topics and key audiences.
 - The Program Manager suggested that a subcommittee using members from all three Community Advisory Committees may be useful.

- ✓ The first thing to do is to have someone from SPU Communications Department come and speak to the committee(s). The Program Manager will work to arrange this, and she will attend the next monthly meeting of the Policy Liaison and the Committee Co-Chairs to brief them.
- With regard to Item #8, C&D Recycling – Transfer Station Diversion Pilot, the Policy Liaison reported that the program is experiencing a delay relating to some labor issues.
 - SWAC may still have a presentation on this, and February is still a good time.
- With regard to Item #9, the Food Packaging Ordinance Improvements, we will keep this on the work plan for February.
 - The committee may also be called upon to write a letter and/or testify to council in March or April.
- With regard to Item #10, WA State Department of Ecology briefing, this is still planned, but may not occur in March.
- With regard to Item #11, the SPU Annual Recycling Report, SWAC will be asked to write a letter and testify to council in June.
 - The Policy Liaison will try to give the SWAC information about the recycling rate in May, but it may not happen until the June meeting.
 - SWAC can use last year's letter as a template.
- Item #12 is an update for the SWAC on the North Transfer Station rebuild.
- With regard to Item #14, Multi-family Composting & Recycling, the Policy Liaison noted that the recycling report indicates that multi-family residences have significantly lower rates of recycling than the other sectors, which is a good thing for the committee to address, perhaps around education and outreach about the new composting requirement.
- With regard to Item #15, the Strategic Business Plan, the Program Manager noted that we are hoping to have a cross CAC meeting to discuss the committees' role in implementing the SBP, probably the second week in January. We'll leave this as a quarterly topic in the SWAC work plan for now.
- ✓ With regard to Item #16, SWAC Guest Speakers, committee member should send ideas to Heather Levy or Dick Lilly.
- With regard to Item #17, Recruitment, the Program Manager explained that right now SWAC has 11 people, but some will be bowing out. The current charter calls for 12 members.
 - We have two new members here tonight.
 - The Program Manager will be checking with SPU key accounts (like hospitals and public schools) to see if they might have anyone who is interested in applying to serve on SWAC.
 - Having someone who could represent multi-family residences would be useful.
 - As members think about recruitment, they should consider what perspectives might be missing from the table.
 - Committee members should carry business cards to help with recruitment.
 - If members need business cards, they should let Heidi know.
 - ✓ Heather would like some business cards. Heidi will have these for her at the next meeting.
- With regard to Item #18, Field Trips, the committee had one this year to Cedar Grove and Waste Management. Next year, Recology and the South Transfer Station are possibilities.
 - ✓ Need a committee member to volunteer to organize these trips.

- With regard to Item #19, Contamination Research, the committee is looking for ways to be proactive, and the issue of plastic bag contamination in recycling and compost may be an issue that SWAC can research independently.
 - Perhaps in the beginning of 2015 the committee will divide this into discrete categories, like the economic cost of contamination, and the drivers of contamination.
- With regard to Item #20, Annual Joint CAC meeting, the Program Manager reported that there will likely be more than one this year and this item should be updated to quarterly.
 - ✓ She asked members to keep the 4th Wednesday of each month open.
- With regard to Item #21, SWAC Charter, an early Q2 joint CAC meeting will likely review the revised and updated CAC charter. There may also be an orientation for new and existing members to discuss how SPU connects to the city council and the mayor.
- With regard to Item #22, Race & Social Justice Training, there will be more training for the committee; will tentatively plan it for the end of the first quarter, possibly April.
- With regard to Item #23, New MRF Request for Proposal (RFP), the Policy Liaison will clarify what kind of discussion can be had with SWAC while SPU is talking to bidders for a new materials recovery facility (MRF).
 - The committee may want to be briefed on the criteria that the city is using to select the winning RFP.
 - The Program Manager added that a presentation to SWAC on how SPU considers contractors, especially with regard to our WMBE (Women and Minority-Owned Business Enterprises) businesses might be helpful, and could be added under the work plan topic of guest speakers.
 - The City Council will vote on the contract after SPU selects the contractor.
- With regard to Item #24, Product Stewardship Legislation for Batteries, the last item on the 2015 Work Plan, the committee just needs to stay informed for now.
- The 2015 Work Plan is a working document and can be update as we go forward. The Committee will not approve it today; some edits may be needed.
- One member asked if the Committee could be more connected with city council.
 - The Program Manger replied that the Committee Chairs usually meet annually with the Chair of the Council's SPU Committee. This didn't happen in 2014 but should happen in 2015.
 - ✓ The Program Manager will check to see if perhaps the City Council's SPUN (SPU and Dept. of Neighborhoods) Chair could speak either to SWAC or to all of the CACs at the next cross CAC meeting.

7) Wrap-Up

- The committee approved the November meeting notes.