



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

April 1, 2015 Meeting Notes
Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue
Room 5965
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
Chair: Heather Levy
Vice-Chair: David Della

Committee Members & CAC Staff	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Dan Corum	Y	Liz Fikejs	SPU Presenter
David Della	N	Luis Hillon	SPU Presenter
Ben Grace	Y	Eberley Wedlake	SPU Presenter
Katie Kennedy	Y	Holly Griffith	Guest
Heather Levy	Y	Lauren Hoerr	Guest
Rodney Proctor	Y	Jamie Lee	Guest
Joseph Ringold	Y, by telephone		
Stephanie Schwenger	Y, by telephone		
Chris Toman	Y		
Heidi Fischer, CAC Program Support	Y		
Sego Jackson, Policy Liaison	Y		
Sheryl Shapiro, Program Manager	Y		

PLEASE NOTE ACTION ITEMS ARE V MARKED AND HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW

Regular Business

- Committee members, staff and guests introduced themselves.
- Sego Jackson is the new Policy Liaison.
- March meeting notes are approved.

Update on Compost Collection, Luis Hillon

In January 2015, the City began requiring food waste, compostable paper, food-soaked cardboard, napkins, and paper towels to be placed in the compost bin rather than the garbage. Our hope is to divert 38,000 tons of food scraps from the landfill via composting, thus helping the City achieve its goal of recycling and composting 60 percent of its waste by 2015.

Luis gave a brief report on the progress of the new compost requirement.

- Luis referred to a table and a graph showing the average tons of compost collected per day in each month of 2014, and the monthly averaged amount from 2009-2014 of compost tons collected per day.
 - One challenge in interpreting the compost collection data in light of the new compost requirement is that food and yard waste fluctuates seasonally.
 - Residential and commercial customers subscribe to SPU for compost collection service. As part of that service, they purchase compost bins.
 - We will be calculating the amount of waste diverted from the landfill as a result of the new compost requirement by measuring participation and efficiency.
 - Participation in the compost requirement is measured by the number of subscriptions to SPU for compost collection service.
 - Single family houses and multi-family units already have subscriptions to SPU for compost collection, but commercial subscriptions for SPU's compost collection services have increased significantly.
 - In January 2014, we had 865 commercial subscriptions, and in February 2015, we have 1,654, which is an increase of 91.2%.
 - Most small and medium businesses have 96 gallon commercial compost bins.
 - Some commercial compost goes to private collectors, and we are trying to get that data.
 - The increase in commercial subscriptions might explain the estimated 20.7% increase in compost tons collected per day in February 2015, rather than increased residential composting.
 - If this increase continues, we expect to collect 14,000-20,000 additional tons of compost by the end of 2015, which puts us on schedule for collecting our goal of 30,000-32,000 additional compost tons per year by the end of 2017.
 - The efficiency of the compost requirement depends on the percentage of food waste routinely placed in compost bins rather than in the garbage.
- Fines for having compostable material in the garbage don't start until July 2015, but waste collection drivers are leaving warning tags for infractions now.
 - We are observing the data on warning tags and looking for trends. We will have a report soon showing how the tags are distributed throughout the city.
 - We are seeing more tags in the south.
 - There is also a low correlation with race.
 - The main issue appears to be a lack of uniformity among individual drivers. Some drivers issue more tags than others. We've not seen a difference between the drivers for Cleanscapes and Waste Management (the two companies with whom SPU contracts for waste collection).

- ❖ Question: Have you seen a correlation between warning tags and income?
- Answer: We haven't looked at this yet. The first demographic we looked at was race, and we will be using more demographics from the American Community Survey, some of which are related to income.

- ❖ Question: At this trajectory, will we hit our goal of recycling and composting 60% of our waste?
- Answer: We are still looking at the numbers, being mindful that the temporary closure of the North Transfer Station (while the new one is being built) impacts our collection data. We may need to do more to achieve the 60% goal.

- ❖ Question: Will you have compost tonnage breakdowns by residential vs. commercial?
- Answer: Yes, Luis will have this information in future monthly organics reports.

Threadcycle Outreach, Liz Fikejs, SPU

Threadcycle is a program of King County and Seattle Public Utilities to let people know that damaged clothes and linens aren't garbage anymore. Up to 95 percent of the clothes, shoes, and linens thrown in the garbage could have been reused or recycled. Local organizations want all your clothes, shoes, and linens for reuse or recycling – even damaged goods – in any condition except wet.

- Liz is here today with an opportunity for SWAC Members to post Threadcycle messages on various social media.
 - The posts should feature positive messages that get people excited and that they can easily act upon.
 - SPU and King County have already developed messages for easy cutting and pasting (see Liz's handout, *Threadcycle Campaign 2015, Messaging Samples*).
 - Members can use the included photos in their messages (using the website to download) or take their own.
 - Messages can also come from Liz's handout, *Top Tips: How to Threadcycle*.
 - This handout is also useful for information shared in conversations.
- Liz gave the SWAC an orientation to the Threadcycle website: www.kingcounty.gov/threadcycle
- She also reviewed SPU's website on the program: <http://www.seattle.gov/util/EnvironmentConservation/Recycling/ReduceReuse/DonateorResell/index.htm>

- ❖ Question: Where does a single shoe go?
- Answer: If it's intact, it may be paired up with another single shoe in the same size and given to someone to wear who would otherwise not have shoes. Damaged items usually go to brokers, agencies that find buyers for the material. The buyers use it by disassembling and recycling it into carpet, or basketball courts, or another product.

- ❖ Question: How far reaching is the program?
- Answer: Throughout all of King County.

- Some discussion followed about how Committee Members felt about carrying the Threadcycle message out to the community vs. listening and bringing back community concerns.
 - One Member noted that she might have social media preferences for this outreach. She might prefer to post the message on Twitter and her nonprofit board's blog, but perhaps not on Facebook.
 - One Member noted that the Threadcycle messaging material is very useful to have with SWAC Members as they go to various community meetings.
 - Another Member agreed.
 - One Member said that clothing exchanges would be a good place to share information about Threadcycle.
- The Threadcycle Program has eight partners (used textile collectors).
 - Five have only drop boxes or pick up services.
 - Three of them have thrift stores where people can drop off textiles: Salvation Army, Seattle Goodwill, and Value Village.
 - Liz is looking for some SWAC Members who might be willing to be secret shoppers and make donations at these locations to find out whether the message of accepting damaged items has reached the front lines.
 - ✓ SWAC Members should let Liz know if they are interested.
 - Several Members noted that they often place all of their clothing donations in bags, and they are generally accepted without being sorted.
 - Liz confirmed that all donations, gently used and damaged, can be packaged together, and do not need to be separated.
- ✓ Liz asked that SWAC Members let her know:
 - If they do send out a Threadcycle message on social media, and
 - What their experience is if they donate damaged items.
- One Member commented that the Threadcycle communications plan was nicely done.

Pilot Food Waste Prevention Outreach, Eberley Wedlake, SPU

Seattle is trying to reduce landfill waste. We've implemented the compost requirement to keep food and yard waste out of landfills. Eberley is working with Veronica Fincher on a pilot project that's one step above that in the waste stream: reducing the amount of food that gets purchased but not eaten.

- The pilot program is funded through June 2015 by a grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology.
- Eberley asked the group how many of them had thrown away food that they could have eaten earlier. Most people raised their hands.
- Eberley reported that 25% of the food consumers buy never gets eaten, and 40% of the food in the farm-to-fork path is wasted.

❖ Question: How does the amount of food we waste compare with other countries?

- Answer: That’s a good question. We are generally higher, but Eberley will get back to SWAC with the data. An NRDC report puts the US and European countries on par in comparison to developing nations (see [NRDC’s Wasted: How America is Losing up to 40% of Its Food](#)).
- Eberley asked the group why they thought food might be wasted. Members suggested the following:
 - Forgetting what food has been purchased
 - Meal plans change
 - Recipes that don’t work out and can’t be salvaged
 - Misconceptions about when produce is bad
 - Portions sold are too large (like parsley bunches)
- Eberley explained food waste has significant environmental and economic impacts.
 - 25% of our fresh water is used to grow food.
 - If food waste was a country, it would be the third largest emitter of green-house gases.
 - 1 in 6 people in the United States is food insecure (unsure of where their next meal is coming from). Food waste causes major economic losses.
- The United Kingdom launched a campaign to “Love Food, Hate Waste,” and decreased food waste by 13% nationwide.
- Eberley referred to her power point and shared tips to prevent food waste:
 - Buy what you need: make a grocery list with quantities needed, buy local and in season, and go to the store more often and buy less at a time
 - Store it to last: use a fruit and veggie storage guide, freeze what you can’t finish, prep items for easy snacking/cooking
 - Track what you have: store new items behind the old in your fridge and cupboards, create an “Eat me now” box for your fridge, and use a whiteboard or app to remember what needs to be eaten
 - Use it all up: have a regular “leftovers night”, try out recipes that combine ingredients you have on hand, and use parts of food that are often discarded
- An extensive baseline study of 440 Seattle households was done last year to identify primary audiences for the food waste prevention pilot program.
 - Families with teens
 - African-American communities
 - Young adults (18-34)
 - High-income households
- Based on these primary audiences, the program chose two neighborhoods for the pilot: Fremont/Wallingford and South Seattle.
 - Numerous events are planned.
 - An event with Google Seattle in Fremont on Earth Day
 - The Moth, a very popular storytelling event. This event’s theme is “SAVE.”
 - Work with the Rainier Valley Teen Center, offering stipends for teens to help with the program

- Partnering with City Fruit and Got Green
 - The goal is to obtain feedback on what works for people to help them reduce waste using surveys and focus groups. We will be handing out some prizes like food storage containers in exchange for feedback.
 - We are also developing tools, like the fruit and vegetable storage guide and the “Eat me first” sticker.
 - We’ll also be sharing better strategies for leftovers.
 - The program has 6 events in 7 days, and would appreciate SWAC’s help in staffing them.
 - ✓ Eberley will send out the event calendar.
 - All of the events are on weekends during the day.
 - ✓ SWAC Members should let her know if they are available.
- The program is considering 4 logos.
 - The logo ideas use different food graphics (an apple, a tomato, and an orange), paired with the following slogans:
 - Love food, stop waste
 - Food: Too good to waste (EPA’s program, also used by King County and other pilot partners)
 - Love food, hate waste (UK’s program)
 - Love food, don’t waste
 - Some discussion followed about the graphics.
 - One Member felt that the apple logo has other associations, like education.
 - Another Member felt that the apple was nice, but she really liked the orange. She added that the logos with the tomato and orange could easily be used with different colors.
 - More discussion followed about using the word “hate” in the slogan and possible alternatives.
 - One Member felt that “hate waste” makes more sense than “stop waste” (when paired with “love food”) but that he didn’t like the word “hate”. He thought people in Seattle would have a negative reaction to the word hate.
 - Another Member agreed.
 - One Member suggested “Love food longer, “or “Adore food, loathe waste.”
 - Another Member liked the use of the word “hate” in the slogan “Love Food, Hate Waste,” and noted that a strong reaction to the word in this context might not be bad.
 - Another Member said she was torn on the word hate, and noted that it was juxtaposed with cheery bright colors.
 - Another Member felt that saying “hate waste” in this context was a negative expression of a positive value.
 - Another Member suggested making the graphic representation of the word “waste” grosser.

- Eberley is looking for 2 to 4 SWAC Members to give feedback on the tools that we're missing, and about the fruit and vegetable storage guide.
 - There would be one meeting needed before the May SWAC meeting.
 - ✓ SWAC Members should contact Eberley if they are available.

SWAC Outreach & Engagement

- The Chair created a "SWAC One-Pager" which was given to the Members for review.
 - Committee Members thanked the Chair for drafting the document.
 - Some discussion followed about whether it would be used only for SWAC Member reference when sharing information about the Committee, or as a public handout.
 - Some Members felt that the one-pager was a reference for them to provide consistent messaging about the SWAC, and not a public handout.
 - Some suggested that colorful SPU brochures and materials about specific programs or services would make better public handouts.
 - Some suggested that the one-pager would make a good public handout, especially to leave behind at outreach events, so that people will have a tangible reminder of what the SWAC is.
 - The one-pager might also be posted on the SWAC website.
 - The Program Manager noted that SWAC Member business cards can also be distributed to the public at outreach events.
 - Committee Members provided some feedback about the one-pager's content.
 - One Member suggested that it would benefit from having one short sentence that summarizes what SWAC does.
 - Another Member said she would give feedback on email to the Chair.
 - Another member noted that the group would benefit from a place to keep documents like this online, and suggested Google docs.
 - ✓ The Chair reported that she would:
 - Expect more feedback on the one-pager by email
 - Add one relatively short, descriptive sentence about what SWAC is
 - Make any edits necessary so that the one-pager could be left behind at public outreach events
 - Send out a revised version of the one-pager to the Members by email before the next meeting.
- Members reported on their progress to further their outreach plans.
 - Ben shared information about Capitol Hill organizations with Joseph.
 - Ben also shared information about Columbia City with Katie.
 - Dan and Rodney met and discussed the Zoo Green Team and SCALLOPS (Sustainable Communities All Over Puget Sound).

- They noted that SCALLOPS chapters can be fairly independent of each other, and that some are more active than others.
 - Rodney also felt that it may be more useful for SWAC Members to do outreach to organizations like SCALLOPS to become more aware of what they are doing, rather than telling them about the SWAC (since most are already familiar with SWAC).
 - Dan added that he saw the SWAC role as more of a conduit to listen to community concerns and bring those concerns to SPU's attention.
 - Heather agreed with that approach.
- Rodney noted that in addition to designing SWAC's outreach plan to achieve geographic diversity, subject matter diversity should also be considered.
 - For example, common issues that affect small businesses should be identified.
 - Heather agreed, and noted the beneficial perspective of Ben's report at an earlier SWAC meeting that the compost requirement was perceived by some small businesses as overwhelming, since it was coming on the heels of the minimum wage increase.
- ✓ Heather will contact Marcia Rutan at SPU about outreach to multi-family units (MFUs).
- The outreach plan is for each SWAC member to attend one community meeting per quarter (for a total of four each year).
- The Chair suggested that after attending a community meeting, Members give their outreach reports at the next SWAC meeting during the Around the Table section. Members can also share any ideas for future meetings or events for themselves or other SWAC Members.
- The Program Manager noted that she would like to see SWAC's outreach efforts tracked.
 - Heidi will capture the reports in the notes.
 - ✓ The Chair will also maintain a spreadsheet.
- The Chair noted that the goal for each SWAC Member is to further specify the community meetings they plan to attend, and to work on identifying a SWAC Member partner to attend with them.
 - ✓ The Chair will follow up with each Member before the next SWAC meeting.

Around the Table

- The Program Manager reported that there are many upcoming outreach events in the spring, summer and fall, and SWAC may be able to join in these events.
- She reported that a CDWAC Member is part of the choir for the Concert for the Tiger and the Deep Blue Sea, which will focus on a response to global warming. The players will be using costumes of recycling characters borrowed from SPU. Details are as follows:
 - Concert for the Tiger and the Deep Blue Sea
Saturday, April 25th at 7:30 pm and Sunday, April 26th at 7:00 pm
Location: University Congregational Church
4515 16th Ave. N.E. Seattle, WA 98105
- SPU's Rainwise program will have a table at the following event:

- Seattle Chinese Garden Peony & Bamboo Festival
April 25 & 26 2015 — 10:00AM — 4:00PM
6000 16th Ave SW, Seattle, WA, Seattle Chinese Garden
- Also on April 25th is the Rainier Beach Bridge to Beach Cleanup and Party, from 9am to 5pm.
 - Free continental breakfast and check-in from 9-9:30am, in front of Rainier Beach Liquor Store at 9258 Rainier Avenue South.
- On April 23rd, the United Way will hold a board recruitment fair at the Bell Harbor Conference Center from 6-7pm, as part of the graduation of 2015 Project LEAD (Leadership, Effectiveness and Diversity) class.
 - Project LEAD provides an intense leadership training experience for people of color and then helps them connect with nonprofit boards and committees.
 - The CAC Program Manager will attend and staff a table to recruit CAC members.

CAC Program Updates and Survey Results

- The Program Manager reported the results of the recently completed annual CAC Member survey.
 - 16 Members completed the survey.
 - Most respondents said that they often review advance materials before the meetings, which she appreciates!
 - Most respondents found meeting notes valuable, although some were unsure of how useful it was to post them online (SPU CAC External webpage).
 - Most respondents find Committee meetings productive and enjoyable.
 - Many Members would like to work on projects outside the regular meeting times.
 - A few respondents suggested that communication with the Policy Liaison could be improved.
 - Some respondents thought that the meeting agendas could leave a bit more time for discussion.
 - The Chair noted that when the SWAC Officers meet each month, they make a concerted effort to leave time for discussion, and will continue to do so.
 - One Member requested a bulleted summary of the survey results.
- The Program Manager reported that SPU will be presenting the 2015 SPU Strategic Business Implementation Schedule to the City Council's Seattle Public Utilities and Neighborhoods Committee (SPUN) on April 14.
 - Though not required, SWAC Members are welcome to attend.
 - This information will also be presented at the Joint CAC Meeting on April 29, along with information about the new City Council districts.

7:34pm, meeting adjourned.