



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

November 4, 2015 Meeting Notes
Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue

Room 4901

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Chair: Heather Levy

Vice-Chair: David Della

Committee Members & CAC Staff	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Quinn Apuzzo	By phone	Hans Van Dusen	Solid Waste Contracts Manager
David Della	Y	Mike Greening	Guest
Anna Dyer	Y	Emily Rothenberg	Guest
Ben Grace	Y		
Holly Griffith	Y		
Katie Kennedy	Y		
Jamie Lee	Y		
Heather Levy	N		
Rodney Proctor	N		
Joseph Ringold	Y		
Stephanie Schwenger	Y		
Chris Toman	Y		
Heidi Fischer, CAC Program Support	Y		
Sego Jackson, Policy Liaison	y		
Sheryl Shapiro, Program Manager	Y		

Action Items:

- ✓ **Before the December meeting, each Member should provide input into the work plan overview document.**

Regular Business

- Committee members and staff introduced themselves.
- October meeting notes are approved.
- Sego, the Policy Liaison, announced that the Green Sports Alliance will be hosting the Champions of Food Symposium at Century Link Field on November 10th.

- This is a significant event convening 200+ regional professional and collegiate sports teams and venues, concessionaires, business and public leaders, restaurant owners and chefs and athletes to explore how the industry can advance more sustainable food and healthier communities.
- SWAC members Holly and Chris expressed interest in attending if they could work it into their schedules.

Commercial Services Overview, Hans Van Dusen, Solid Waste Contracts Manager

- Hans began by thanking SWAC for volunteering their time and efforts to advise SPU on solid waste programs and policies.
- Hans then referred to a handout and briefly described the following commercial waste services and assistance offered/provided by SPU.

1. Garbage services

- Provided under City contracts by service area
- Billing and customer service is through the collectors (unlike residential)
- Current service contracts began in 2009 and end in 2017, 2019, or 2021, at City’s discretion

2. Recycling services

- ‘Open market’ for services provided by a variety of vendors – such as WM, Recology, Republic, SeaDruNar, Cedar Grove, etc
- Recology and WM also provide free residential cart service within their service areas as part of City contracts. This service includes up to 2 carts collected every other week and requires set-out at curb or alley on contractor collection day and week.

3. Organics Services

- ‘Open market’ for services provided by a variety vendors, but primarily Cedar Grove.
- Recology provides City-wide commercial organics service under contract with the City.
- Recology and WM also provide low cost residential cart service within their service areas as part of City contracts. This service includes up to 2 carts collected weekly and requires set-out at curb or alley on contractor collection day.

4. Clear Alley Requirements and Services

- The City prohibits permanent storage of containers (dumpsters/recycling and food waste bins) in right of way in some business districts, including downtown, Pioneer Square and International District.
- Most buildings constructed in the last 15-20 years have a space for dumpsters that’s not in the right of way, so this limitation applies mostly to older buildings.
- Businesses can store a cart on their property and wheel it out for waste collection. Those that do not have a designated space for dumpsters on their own property can use pre-paid bag services. These bags are picked up 2-3 times per day, depending on needs.

5. Recycling and food waste requirements

- Recyclables have been prohibited from commercial garbage for a decade.
- Food waste and compostable food packaging has been prohibited from garbage since 1/1/15.
- Commercial customers receive 2 warnings and then a \$50 fee on their accounts for violation of recycling requirements. Fees for food waste in garbage will begin 1/1/16.
- SPU field inspectors randomly monitors commercial garbage containers and have not issued any fines to date.

6. SPU Recycling and food waste assistance

- SPU staff provide phone, email and onsite consultation and assistance. Approximate 200 SPU assistance visits for 2015 and hundreds of remote consults.
- SPU provides free posters, labels and bins (\$75,000 in 2015)
- Green Business assistance (\$200,000 in 2015) provides:
 - Response assistance by phone, email and onsite
 - Proactive recruiting and assistance through neighborhood canvassing (450 for 2015)
 - Business recognition – GOM and Regional
- Focused ethnic business assistance (\$100,000 in 2015) through community organizations
- Technical and resource support for public event recycling and composting
- Additional outreach and assistance through direct mail, industry networks, and partner organizations.
- Food Plus Outreach
- SPU's 2015 outreach funding is 50% higher than 2014 so that we can spread the word about the new food waste requirement and provide assistance in achieving compliance.

7. Food Plus Outreach and Packaging Ordinance Work

- Staff and Green Business Program site visits, inspections, technical assistance, special events.
- New outreach to ethnic chambers and their members on packaging ordinance changes.
- Beginning additional outreach to stakeholder sectors on packaging ordinance changes.

8. Waste Prevention and Stewardship

- Commercial food waste prevention research next steps with report by end of year.
- Large generator waste reduction research.
 - We've identified 30 commercial customers that are generating less tonnage in 2014 compared to 2007, including Seattle Goodwill and Wholefoods, and we are looking into whether they've instituted any waste reduction activities. SPU and Cascadia are both having discussions with these customers.
- Lots of stewardship-related contact with businesses/industry. Examples include packaging producers, the battery and paint industry, electronic product producers, etc. Working with City Light on solar module recycling approaches involves contact with local solar installers and manufacturers.

- Hans then passed around samples of outreach materials that SPU distributes to commercial customers.
- Sego noted that SPU's work in the commercial sector also includes things like interacting with businesses at the Green Sports Alliance Symposium and other events, as well as doing outreach to ethnic chambers of commerce.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: Are there advantages to having an 'open market' for recycling services provided by a variety of vendors?
- Answer: State law requires that we do it that way. It does encourage businesses to be competitive in pricing.

- ❖ Committee Member Comment: Our interest in knowing more about the commercial sector came out of this year's Recycling Report. We thought that since the commercial sector is so large, there should be more resources to help reduce waste there, but we weren't sure what programs and funding already exist.

- ❖ Committee Member Comment: I read an article in the Seattle Weekly about Taylor Hoang, owner of Seattle's Pho Cyclo Café, who is advocating for immigrant-owned businesses. One of the things she talks about is how not all compostable packaging is suitable for ethnic restaurants, because they can cause the starches in rice and noodles, when mixed with sauce, to stick to the bottom and become inedible. (The article can be found at: <http://www.seattleweekly.com/home/960290-129/pho-cyclo-owner-advocates-for-immigrant-owned>.)
 - Sego noted that SPU staff have met with Ms. Hoang before and are planning another meeting with her next week.
 - One Member suggested that perhaps she could come and speak to SWAC, or to all three SPU Community Advisory Committees.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: The commercial sector has a good rate of diversion (composting and recycling rather than sending trash to the landfill), but they do generate a lot of trash. Is there an opportunity for more diversion in the commercial sector?
- Answer: Hans replied that he believes there is. For instance, when we began the requirement to compost food waste, one-third of the ethnic businesses we surveyed were not compliant. But then we helped them to take action, and 70% of the businesses that we worked with became compliant. More opportunities like this exist to increase the diversion rate.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: You mentioned earlier that SPU has not imposed any fines in the commercial sector for noncompliance with the recycling requirement. Why?
- Answer: Hans replied that SPU has issued some warnings, and the rate of compliance is high. No formal decision was made not to impose fines, but so far they have not been deemed necessary.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: How many inspectors does SPU have to identify noncompliance?
 - Answer: Approximately eight, but they also do a lot of customer service work. Only three of those inspectors are dedicated to the commercial sector.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: Do you anticipate more fines for noncompliance with the compost requirement (than for noncompliance with the recycling requirement), when and if it is imposed, and if so, how prepared are you for that?
 - Answer: We don't necessarily anticipate more fines. Commercial customers are required to sign up for compost service through SPU, so we can make sure that they have a bin for compostable material. That alone should encourage compliance. Further, it's more a question of outreach than the \$50 fine. Restaurants struggle with front of the house issues, with customers not correctly using the compost bin, for which they cannot be held accountable. Food retail businesses often share dumpsters with other business tenants, and it's difficult to discern responsibility for noncompliance. We are considering more outreach to property managers to get their suggestions on how to increase compliance.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: What measures are most effective at changing people's behavior?
 - Answer: Things like compost buckets and good labeling seem to help.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: Has the number of SPU staff working on this increased?
 - Answer: We recently added FTE and a half to work on outreach and assistance for the compost requirement. Other than that, staff has been at about the same number for the last few years, including inspectors.

- ❖ Committee Member Comment: SPU should increase inspections and fines to increase the pressure for compliance.

- ❖ Committee Member Comment: Kudos to SPU for the Green Business Outreach Program. Having someone come with information helps to create changes.

- ❖ Committee Member Comment: Seattle's population has increased, which creates new challenges.
 - Response: Yes, there has been so much growth. We are proactively reaching out to new accounts to give them the information they need to comply with the recycling and composting requirements.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: What happens if there is a lot of illegal dumping in a particular alley or neighborhood?
 - Answer: First, SPU works with the adjacent businesses to make sure that they all have compost, recycling, and garbage services. Then we start documenting and fining for the illegal dumping.

- Sheryl, the Program Manager, asked whether Seattle’s newly formed City Council Districts will change how SPU identifies and reaches out to new customers.
 - Hans responded that he didn’t believe this would significantly impact SPU’s methods in this area.

Compost Requirement Update, Hans Van Dusen

- SPU has done a lot of outreach about the compost requirement, including direct mailing, media ads (including radio, television, and ethnic newspapers), and bus ads. These advertisements have been done in numerous languages.
 - Hans showed some of these outreach materials and advertisements.
- SPU also did a lot of community outreach, staffing tables at community events and giving away compost buckets and compost.
- SPU surveyed our customers in March and then again in July about their awareness of the compost requirement and of the future fine for noncompliance.
 - We used those results to focus our outreach where it was most needed.
- We’re going to do another survey on November 15th.
- We plan to go forward with the \$50 commercial fine for noncompliance with the compost requirement, but depending on the survey results, we may decide to delay the \$1 fee for residential noncompliance.
- We’re currently placing stickers on SPU customers’ yard waste carts that say “Thank you for composting.”
- Waste collection drivers are still giving notices for noncompliance, but the number of notices given has dropped significantly.

❖ Committee Member Question: Could SWAC write a letter after reviewing the November survey results?

➤ Answer: Yes. The survey results will be available at SWAC’s December meeting.

Organics Contamination Reduction Workgroup Overview, Sego Jackson, SPU, SWAC Liaison

- The noncompostable material that sometimes gets into compostable, or organic material, is called a contaminant.
- More contaminants are finding their way into compostable material, and it’s a problem.
- Cedar Grove Composting and the City of Kirkland spearheaded discussion on this issue and have brought varied stakeholders together to address it. This group is referred to as the Organics Contamination Reduction Workgroup.
 - This is first time the entire organics stream has worked together in this way, from biopolymer and packaging producers to collection programs and compost facilities.
 - Sego and other SW staff are participating in this new workgroup and on its subcommittees.

- Quinn and Anna, two SWAC Members, are also involved.
- Segó referred to a power point presentation.
 - The group’s mission is to “collaborate to eliminate contamination in organic feedstocks while expanding end products and markets. “
 - The group has four goal areas and subcommittees:
 - Education/Outreach
 - Operational/Contractual/Policy
 - Processing
 - Upstream Strategies
- Segó is on the Upstream Strategies Subcommittee, which had their first meeting a week and a half ago.
 - Their objectives are to:
 - Identify primary types of contamination by categories and their impacts
 - Track various UPSTREAM sources for contaminants
 - Identify WHY contamination happens
 - Develop list of most prevalent entry points
 - Develop strategies for engaging UPSTREAM stakeholders to help find solutions and develop policies
 - The Upstream Strategies Subcommittee Members completed a survey and chose the following priorities:
 - *Describe/quantify how key contaminants impact the system (and identify those contaminants) 57.14%
 - Compile studies about WHY contamination occurs 53.57%
 - Develop policy options and other drivers 46.43%
 - Develop recommendations for common packaging (tint, etc.) 25.00%
 - Develop a list of most prevalent entry points 25.00%
 - Develop strategies to require labels on packaging and produce 21.43%
 - Compile studies that track sources of upstream contamination 17.86%
 - Compile studies about why contamination occurs 14.29%
 - Other 10.71%
 - Determine potential for new product development to fill gaps 7.14%
 - Determine data gaps and how to expediently fill the gaps 7.14%
- Anna (SWAC member) reported that the Education and Outreach Subcommittee hasn’t met yet. The Operations/Contractual/Policy Subcommittee (which she is also on) has met twice so far, and is discussing how to write policies to help close the feedback loop, so that the person who sees what’s in the garbage is getting that information back to the municipality, who then educates the generator (customer).
 - Quinn, who is also on the Operations/Contractual/Policy Subcommittee, added that they are exploring how best to use language to motivate compliance.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: Are other composters involved, besides Cedar Grove?
- ❖ Answer: Yes, Lenz Composting and Silver Springs are also involved, and we hope to engage other compost facilities.

- The workgroup is organizing tours to Cedar Grove and Lenz.
 - They want to better understand the contaminants coming into the compost facility from the commercial sector and from the residential sector, and identify the source of those items.
 - Sego hopes that people will experience all that's involved in the sorting process.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: Which processors have a sort line other than Lenz?
- Answer: PacifiClean had a sort line (before they had to temporarily suspend operations for the west side of the state due to the apple maggot quarantine), and so does Cedar Grove's Maple Valley processing plant.

- One Committee Member noted that some of the routes collecting commercial and residential organics (material for composting) are mixed.
 - Another Member suggested that they could get the amount of residential organics along with the small commercial carts.
 - She added that identifying whether a contaminant comes from the residential or commercial sector is important, because often one sector believes it's the other.

- ❖ Committee Member Question: What will be the Workgroup's end product?
- Answer: This is the beginning of a process, and we'll identify our end products as we move forward.

2016 Workplan Update, David Della, SWAC Vice-Chair, and Chris Toman, SWAC Secretary

- Heather, SWAC Chair, recently sent an email to all SWAC Members with an updated version of the 2015 work plan, including updates from SWAC's recent mid-year review.
- She also shared an overview document for SWAC Members to reflect on and provide input for what they would like to see on SWAC's 2016 work plan.
- ✓ **Before the December meeting, each Member should provide input into the work plan overview document.** The detailed work plan is provided for reference, but Heather encourages Members to provide input at the higher level.
 - This will be on SWAC's December meeting agenda.
 - If Members did not receive this email from Heather, they should contact Chris.
- Sego is also working with SPU staff on topics for SWAC's 2016 Workplan, and Sheryl is working on the larger topics and those related to SPU's Strategic Business Plan.

Joint CAC Meeting Observations, Anna Dyer, SWAC Member and Sheryl Shapiro, CAC Program Manager

- All three of the Community Advisory Committees met on October 27th to learn about and discuss the Growth and Equity Analysis of the City’s Draft Comprehensive Plan.
- Many SWAC Members did not attend, so Sheryl and Anna gave a brief description of their experiences at the meeting.
 - This is the first time that an equity analysis has been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.
 - Anna reported that it was a good overview of a complicated issue; however, she wasn’t convinced that the equity analysis made a big impact on the actual planning.
 - She would like to go into more depth and hear about strategies to mitigate displacement.
 - Sego, the SWAC Policy Liaison, who was also at the October 27th meeting, noted that he felt similarly.
 - The City is still using the urban village model, and growth is centered around transportation hubs.
 - The conversation after the presentation was interesting. Members asked the question: what happens to communities that don’t have transportation hubs?
- Sheryl, the Program Manager, noted that Members (and the public) can provide comments on the Draft Comprehensive Plan until November 18th.
- David, SWAC Member, reported that he was involved with developing the urban village concept twenty years ago. He thinks the equity analysis will have an impact. This is the first time it’s been done this way in Seattle. Indeed, most places in the United States aren’t doing this. It’s complicated but helpful.
- There was also some discussion about how equity could be explored in future Committee’s work. The following topics were suggested:
 - Upcoming water rate design plans
 - How much money SPU customers can save by drinking Seattle’s tap water (which comes from protected mountain watersheds) rather than buying bottled water
 - Rebate programs
 - Utility Discount Program
 - How to effectively communicate with communities and businesses
 - Equitable mitigation for capital improvement projects and other projects
 - We can’t have a system based on claims/complaints, because some people who are impacted won’t file claims or make complaints.
- Jamie, SWAC Member, noted that getting an equity analysis done at all is a really big deal. We are starting to make progress in this area, but it will take some time.

Outreach, Sheryl Shapiro, CAC Program Manager

Sheryl distributed a handout listing the following upcoming outreach events:

Scheduled Solid Waste Outreach Events

Fall 2015

- Hmong New Year Celebration*

Sat., 11/7 Anna

Additional Possibilities

- Green Sports Alliance Tues., 11/10
<http://greensportsalliance.org/green-sports-alliance-champions-of-food-seattle-symposium/> #
- EPA waste sort activity. This is very low key. Pat Kaufman will join a couple EPA staff at their office building downtown to perform a simple waste sort – spread the tarp, dump the cans, glove up and do a quick and dirty sort. No date set for this yet. # TBD, **Heather, Chris**
- (TBD) Chinese Information Service Center (CISC) Celebration + Mon., 11/16 5-8
- WCP Designing Sustainability Programs # Wed., 11/18, 9:30-2:30

* Contact Tilth coordinator, Justin Maltry (206) 633-0451 Ext. 125 justinmaltry@seattletilth.org

Contact Pat Kaufman, SPU pat.kaufman@seattle.gov

+ Contact Marcella Wilson, SPU marcella.wilson@seattle.gov

- David reported that the Halloween Boo Bash was very rainy but still had good attendance.
- Chris reported that the UW Green Team has volunteer opportunities to attend UW football games.
 - He will send more information out to SWAC.
 - He will be volunteering at a game later this month.
- Sego reported that SWAC Members should contact him by noon tomorrow if they would like to attend the Green Sports Alliance event on November 10th.
 - If Members decide after noon tomorrow that they would like to attend, they can still contact Sheryl.
 - She may be able to sponsor some Members with the CAC budget.

Around the Table

- Tonight is Stephanie's last SWAC meeting. Chris thanks Stephanie for her service and the Members applauded. Stephanie noted that it has been a pleasure to work with all the SWAC Members and that it has been a great learning experience.
- Sheryl reported that there will be an event about inclusive outreach and public engagement at the Capitol Hill Library tomorrow night. Members should contact Sheryl if they are interested, but it's not necessary to RSVP.
 - Anna noted that she plans to attend.

Meeting adjourned, 7:23pm.