



**SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)**

September 7, 2016 Meeting Notes  
 Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue  
 Room 4901  
 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
 Chair: Chris Toman  
 Vice-Chair: Ben Grace

Committee Members & CAC Staff	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Quinn Apuzzo	N	Liz Fikejs	Senior Conservation Program Manager
David Della	P	Megan Jones	Guest
Anna Dyer	P	Steve Blum	Guest
Ben Grace	Y		
Holly Griffith	Y		
Jamie Lee	N		
Heather Levy	Y		
Rodney Proctor	N		
Emily Newcomer	Y	<b>CAC Staff</b>	
Joseph Ringold	N	Sego Jackson	Solid Waste LOB Committee Liaison
Emily Rothenberg	N	Sheryl Shapiro	CAC Program Manager
Chris Toman	N	Natasha Walker	CAC Program Coordinator

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Liz said she would keep Committee members posted on the vendor selection, once they get to that point. She also solicited CAC member interest in helping promote the roll out of the North Transfer Station.

**Regular Business**

SWAC Secretary, Holly Griffith called the meeting to order at 5:42 PM

- Meeting notes from August were approved.
- Sheryl introduced a new Business agenda item: Safety. Sheryl indicated emergency exits, bathrooms, and noted that she would be following up with more details concerning emergency supplies and procedures at a future meeting.

**Follow-up to ACTION ITEMS from August meeting:**

- Are any of the activities at the transfer station considered revenue generating?  
 Garbage, organics, and clean green services are revenue generating, along with a few smaller miscellaneous ones. The first three generated \$8.6M last year, the remaining ones about \$500,000. If this question is in regards to the proposed reuse/recycling facility that's a part of

STS2– that remains to be determined. We’re planning on the activities there to be financial neutral, whether or not we get any revenue from them.

- A committee member expressed interest in seeing how the 7.2% rate increase would be messaged to customers.

Awaiting follow-up from Hans VanDusen. Will follow-up in the October meeting notes.

- A committee member requested sector-breakdown of yard and food waste processing increase reported at this meeting.

Awaiting follow-up from Hans VanDusen. Will follow-up in the October meeting notes.

**These August items are for consideration for follow-up in the future, to be discussed at a SWAC Officers meeting.**

- Committee members expressed interest in a guest speaker who can talk about:
  - Changing demographics and impact on our programs, i.e. every year there are less single family homes, so you trade residents with high diversion rates for residents with low diversion rates (quote from a Committee member)
  - The changing mix in the recycling stream; i.e. the evolving ton, the impact to SPU programs, and implications of these on measurements and goals.
  - The sustainability of certain rate structures; Vas suggested he could find someone to address this in Economic Services.

**1. RFI to RFP – Reuse Area at North Transfer Station**

Liz provided an overview of the upcoming Reuse/Recycling building at the remodeled North Transfer Station, reviewing goals of reusable collection service and limitations to the reusable materials (hereinafter, “reusables”) collection area. She walked Committee members through the Request for Information (RFI) process and the feedback received by contractors on the operating requirements, site layout, and potential compensation models. Liz then reviewed SPU’s decisions related to the reusable portion of the Transfer Station, as a result of feedback received by contractors.

- **Committee member question:** So I assume the reusables area is for self-haulers (as opposed to commercial vehicles)?
  - **Answer:** Yes.
- **Committee member question:** Is the City going to be running it, or will it be a subcontractor?
  - **Answer:** It will be a contractor for the reusables portion. The recycling will be SPU staff, as well as SPU staff on the tipping floor.
- **Committee member question:** So was that the expectation that the materials collected at the station would not stay at the station to be purchased and redistributed? They will go to where the contractor has their brick and mortar operation?
  - **Answer:** Yes. It won’t be a shop there. It’s just a collection point.
- **Committee member question:** Is there any projection on how that will impact the self-haul numbers? Because that’s one we struggle with the most.
  - **Answer:** There isn’t a projection on numbers, but hopefully that will improve. We also want to factor in the convenience benefits and financial incentive aspects. From Tacoma’s experience, their reusables area has been hugely successful, more than they

anticipated. We also hope to learn from our reusables experience, and when the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the SFS opens up, there is the thought to have a reusables station down there as well.

- **Committee member question:** Is there going to be an education component to the reuse recycling, or just providing a drop off? (Referring to both onsite and advanced promotion)
  - **Answer:** There is going to be signage and promotion of the collection site.
  - **Answer:** The challenge of having education on that site is that the space is so confined. We only have 500 square feet for the collection itself. The whole transfer station site may have an education room overall, but I think that's still in the planning phases.
- **Committee member question:** Given that Sego and I have talked about the City including waste prevention numbers in the diversion numbers, would this be something you would measure and track and treat as diversion?
  - **Answer (Sego):** One of things we asked of the vendor is that they provide very good numbers about the materials. A contractual arrangement allows us to much more easily gather that.
- **Committee member question:** Did you say the Goodwill did or did not reply to the RFI?
  - **Answer:** They did.
- **Comment from staff member:** One of things I thought was interesting, as we talked to reuse businesses about their business models... You have a business model such as Goodwill who will be very open to what people drop off, and they barely say no. That's a completely different business model than the reusable building materials model who have to be extremely limited in what they accept. One of the first things we got feedback on was that they have different approaches for those different streams, so they'd need their own people on site.
- **Question from staff member:** What is Phase II?
  - **Answer:** Phase II that I just referred to is the second phase of the South Transfer Station which involves redeveloping the old South Transfer Station property. It may include a reuse area. However, there is also a "phasing" that will occur at North Transfer Station. The remodeled station will open first with customers using both the recycling building and the garbage disposal tipping floor. Then slightly later, we will start up the collection service for reusables in the Reuse-Recycling Center.
- **Committee member question:** Has the South Transfer Station reusable space been allocated yet? And would that be something you'd consider?
  - **Answer:** There are a lot of requests on that space, but that's something we're considering.
- **Committee member question:** So is there going to be any kind of publicity or notice about what's accepted in the recycling center? So if they show up with something not acceptable, they're not surprised or upset that they can't drop it off. Any kind of advance notice?
  - **Answer:** Yes. We don't want customers disappointed that they can't drop something off. That came up through the RFI process. Contractors were concerned about it being a dumping area. We'll have information on our website, and in newsletters that will cover what will be accepted at the transfer station, and the reuse-recycling center.
- Sego noted that the pressures of finishing the North Transfer Station had originally lead him to assume the reusables effort would take place at a much later point, and thanked Liz for stepping forward to take this project on now.
- Liz said she would keep Committee members posted on the vendor selection, once they get to that point. She also solicited CAC member interest in helping promote the roll out of the North Transfer Station Reuse-Recycling Center.

## 2. **Commingled Recycling Report - Preview**

Sego Jackson provided a brief history on the DRAFT Washington State Department of Ecology *Northwest Region Report: Optimizing the Commingled Residential Curbside Recycling Systems in Northwest Washington*. Sego explained that he had been involved in this effort in his previous role in Snohomish County, and continued to be involved in his role at the City of Seattle. Dick Lily had previously been involved for Seattle. Sego reviewed key elements of the report, including:

- **Plastic bags and film:** Sego provided an overview of the Wrap Recycling Action Program (WRAP).
- **Plastics:** the mix of plastic resins and containers is becoming more complex. Northwest Region Workgroup participants, including Ecology, City of Seattle, King County, and a local legislator are exploring “the potential for siting a Plastic Recovery Facility (PRF) in the Northwest Region to improve the ability to collect and process existing curbside plastics and additional plastics.”

Sego encouraged Committee members to look at the report as a “menu” of options, as not all options would be applicable or make sense in the City of Seattle. Sego noted that we had previously said the full presentation on this Report would take place in October; however, this might not happen until the report is finalized, likely by the end of the year.

- **Committee member question:** How many PRFs are there in the Nation?
  - **Answer:** There are two that I know that are considered PRFs. There’s also one in Canada.
- **Committee member question:** What is the closest PRF to Seattle that’s not in Canada?
  - **Answer:** The closest is Canada and we’re going to look at it. The L.A. operation I haven’t seen. Then I think St. Louis is the closest and it is owned by QRS.. The Baltimore site is their second site. They had a place further south, which they closed because the Baltimore facility was more efficient and could handle the material from the same watershed as the southern site.
- **Committee member question:** I was wondering which legislator you were working with?
  - **Answer:** Representative Norma Smith.
- **Committee member question:** Would it be ok if I stole the picture of the plastic bags on the machine?
  - **Answer:** We’ve used it over and over again. I think that originated it with Republic Services, who has asked for credit.
  - **Committee member comment:** I wanted to use a photo on the front slide. I’ll follow up with you.

## 3. **Bag Ban Update - Report to Council and Proposed Ordinance Change**

Sego went through the highlights from the Bag Ban Ordinance Report presented to the City Council in July. He noted that Tacoma took a vote that very night on bag bans, which passed unanimously, bringing the total number of Cities with bag bans to 15 across Washington. Sego said the bag ban model used in Seattle is the preferred model; the formula of which consists of a ban on plastic carry-out bags, a charge for large paper bags, and encouraged re-use of bags.

From the Bag Ban Ordinance Report, Sego reviewed compliance statistics from an SPU intern's visits to 25 businesses from 4 retail sectors. The Council expressed concerns about the lack of enforcement of the bag ban. Sego explained that while less bags are entering the waste stream, there are still a number of bags seen in the community. He said that comments from several Council members suggested that they think the time has come to begin enforcing. In addition, Councilmember Mike O'Brien asked about San Francisco's Styrofoam ban. The fact that this is on a Councilmember's mind is notable, Sego said.

Sego then transitioned to the Proposed Packaging Ordinance revisions, which addresses expanded polystyrene foam, food service ware and packaging, and the Bag ban. He explained that a decision has been made to split these elements into three parts, and move forward with the bag ban component now. He explained that the driver in moving forward the bag part of ordinance changes is to address the bag charge sunset date, which is rapidly approaching. Sego noted that the ordinance will also address contamination issues by restricting green tinting to compostable bags only, and that there are requirements about "shelf talkers" (information about a product on a retailer shelf) in the foam ordinance. Lastly, there are some educational components to address the fact that the ordinance does not restrict the ability to sell foam, but does inform food vendors it's something they can't provide to their customers. He said this nuance can be confusing.

Sego also spoke to the issue of flexible packaging; not bags, but other film packaging in the waste stream. He explained that SPU is working with industry to encourage a viable program, perhaps a retailer takeback program.

Lastly, Sego noted that there had been increasingly more press and media action in these topic areas, and that he anticipated these topics bringing more attention than originally anticipated.

- **Committee member question:** Was it mystery shoppers visiting the businesses?
  - **Answer:** No, and a Councilmember questioned us on that.
- **Committee member question:** How can you be "partially compliant"?
  - **Answer:** They were either compliant (no plastic, and charging min 5c for paper), not compliant (providing plastic bags), or partially compliant (no plastic, but not charging for paper).
- **Committee member question:** Is that plastic and paper?
  - **Answer:** These numbers are all plastic grocery bags in the garbage. Trickier is trying to tease apart what's going on in the recycling side. We couldn't figure out what's going on with paper bags, because they are in a large corrugated cardboard category. And it is difficult to determine the rest of the story because the numbers are hard to get. For example, flexible packaging is much lighter; we don't know how much it is displacing recyclable package that was going into the recycling stream.
- **Committee member question:** If you didn't remove the sunset, they wouldn't have to charge?

- **Answer:** I'm sure there would be businesses who would stop charging, and others that would probably continue. Some don't want to charge, others use the bag fee mandate as the reason they charge.
- **Committee member question:** Is there any Eastside city (Bellevue, Renton) that are going to start banning bags? I ask because if I shop on the Eastside, I might come back to Seattle with the bags.
  - **Answer:** Kirkland has. I don't know if it is in the works for other Eastside cities.
- **Committee member question:** As far as enforcement goes, did you guys do anything?
  - **Answer:** I wasn't here then, so I'm going to speak for what I know. Letters went out, there were spot inspections with warning letters. Staff, interns or our consultants would then work with businesses to address the bag issue (but that hasn't been the focus of their work with businesses). We have not had a concerted effort for a number of years. We have gotten feedback that businesses feel unfairness/inequity when they comply and then their competitors do not.
  - **Committee member comment:** We hear that with packaging.
  - **Committee member comment:** It's an example where Council has done something, but we haven't done the next step to make it fully functional.
  - **Committee member comment:** Seattle is sometimes portrayed as this trash-concerned city, and the reality is that we're making great strides without much enforcement.
    - **Answer:** Yes, but you get to the point where you've got to start cleaning things up. There is a fine of \$250, but there have been no fines for plastic bags, just warnings.
- **Committee member question:** Isn't foam banned already?
  - **Answer:** Yes, but the proposal that has been worked on includes tinting restrictions on foam.
- **Committee member comment:** A Committee member explained some of the complexities /nuances about who the current foam ban applies to, and how this is a lot to ask of the consumer to understand. Ex: Draper Valley chicken from California could come on foam.
- **Committee member question:** Does this apply to produce bags as well as shopping bags?
  - **Answer:** I don't think we sent the detailed draft of the bag revisions that are proposed. We will send to you. This is just one step to limit the film contamination in compost facilities, but we are not going to immediately begin encouraging folks to put green bags in their compost as they may come from other cities (and thus, not be compostable).

#### 4. SPU Solid Waste S.W.O.C. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges)

Sego provided context for the S.W.O.C. analysis, and walked Committee members through the process and results of the Solid Waste LOB (Line of Business) S.W.O.C., as well as the next steps for integrating the results of the SW LOB into the SPU-wide SWOC. He reviewed the handouts:

**Laundry list:** comprised of past SWOCs, from SWAC feedback, from Segos's experience, and from other staff in SW LOB.

**Final document:** Refined, prioritized results of the facilitated exercise from a group of SW LOB staff.

Highlights of the S.W.O.C. lists included:

- Some items identified as challenges or weaknesses in past S.W.O.C.s had funds allocated and were accomplished
- Some past S.W.O.C. weaknesses had become LOB strengths
- Some weaknesses were things SWAC had called out in their recent recycling report

Sego explained that at the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting, SWAC members would hear more about the SPU-wide S.W.O.C. exercise. He also said that the results could be used to inform the SWAC work plan for 2017.

- o **Committee member question:** Do I see education and outreach as both a strength and weakness?
  - o **Committee member question:** One of the weaknesses is about equity, but then you say you have good materials?
  - o **Answer:** Yes. We've got a great suite of materials, but if they are not being used adequately... It's an opportunity.
  - o **Committee member comment:** But haven't we done a lot of transcreation? I feel like there has been a lot of effort to address the gaps in underserved communities.
  - o **Answer:** I would say SPU has been exceptional in the field, but there's more work to do. That's a trick when dealing with the weaknesses: it's not meant to be a criticism, but to show where we could address a weakness through additional resources or other means. For example, is it that our efforts with multi-family are not effective, or is it that we haven't allocated adequate budget to ramp up the effective activities to the degree needed?
  - o **Committee member comment:** When tools are applied consistently and in an equitable manner, we'll get good outcomes. We've got great tools but they may be patchy in their application.

## 5. Preparation for the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting with SPU Director, Mami Hara

In preparation for the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting with newly appointed SPU Director Mami Hara, CAC Program Manager Sheryl Shapiro invited SWAC members to contribute questions to be asked of Mami at the meeting. She noted that Mami would be interested to hear what SWAC members feel is important, from a customer perspective.

Sheryl distributed index cards and provided time to individually reflect, followed by a facilitated discussion. She asked Committee members to frame their questions in terms of philosophy and interests, to keep the questions broad stroke as Mami will just be settling into her new role and will not yet be completely up to speed with SPU specifics. She said specific questions could be entertained at a later point.

Sheryl noted that she would also be emailing CAC members for additional questions. She said she would distribute the full list of Committee member's questions.

- **Committee member idea:** I think it's fair to ask what kind of exposure she has with waste recycling / waste prevention initiatives
- **Committee member idea:** Goals for 2017 / next five years regarding SW
- **Committee member idea:** Favorite things she worked on in Philadelphia
- **Committee member idea:** Any overlap with waste recycling, waste prevention in her previous work/projects
- **Committee member idea:** What drew her to this position? The big projects she's excited to tackle in the next 5 years?
- **Committee member idea:** How would you describe your leadership style?
- **Committee member idea:** What does it look like when a utility is doing a good job serving its customers?
- **Committee member idea:** What kind of relationship is she looking to have with the CACs? Has she worked with CACs in the past?
- **Committee member idea:** How she plans to employ her experience in each LOB
- **Committee member idea:** What tools are effective at creating behavior change? In light of new residents Seattle is gaining. They may not share the same environmental cultural value that Seattle is known for.
- **Committee member idea:** What are your hobbies when you're not sitting at your desk at SPU
- **Committee member idea:** What is your experience with Equity & inclusion programming at previous utility? What does she think we can learn from that? Coming from a more diverse, and larger city.
- **Committee member idea:** Is she a Seahawks fan?
- **Committee member question:** Does Philadelphia have commingled/single stream recycling?

Sego encouraged SWAC members to look at the Philadelphia Solid Waste system. He said he would also be looking at the Pennsylvania State Stewardship legislation – to see if any has been passed, or even been run? He said it would be interesting to see what kind of system Mami has observed or used.

In addition to the questions for Mami, Sheryl said that each committee would have a chance at the 9/28 All-CAC meeting to brief Mami on highlights of their work. The CAC Officers were nominated to provide that briefing. She noted that some of this may go in Councilmember Herbold's update as well. Sheryl invited SWAC members to discuss the content of that briefing, such as issues SWAC has talked about, written to council about, or things that merited weighing in on at the municipal level. The following suggestions were made by SWAC members:

- SWAC drafted one-pager from a while ago; think it would be helpful to have one PowerPoint slide that is the equivalent of that. Sheryl asked the Committee member to share that document
- Food waste ban
- Packaging
- Transfer stations
- Field trips
- Apple maggots – organics. Very informed about
- Industry experience, and a lot of passion around waste diversion programming

- Lucky to have Segó as policy liaison because connection with product stewardship
- Pull out work plan and review
- We are “waste nerds”
- Committee is a good mix of perspectives.
  - Ben and Jaime bring their perspectives from the ID and as small business owners
  - Anna - Housing authority perspective
  - Value the diverse perspectives
- Sheryl has done a good job managing the committee
- Equity and outreach conversations are valuable
- One Committee member stated that they loved SWAC because they get to learn so much. They noted that in their day job, they don't get the opportunity to sit down and have someone teach them what they know. They said they feel like a student taking a masters class.

## **6. CAC Program Updates**

Sheryl provided some CAC Program updates:

- Charter: There was a round of applause from the Committee on completing this.
- Member Agreement: Signed copies are due by the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting.
- Media Release: Signed copies are due by the 9/28 All-CAC Meeting.
- ORCA Passes: A sign-up was provided for those interested.
- Roster: Sheryl passed around the roster for Committee members to provide updates as needed.

## **7. Around the table**

- Sheryl provided a current membership report. Check the current roster for membership status.

**Adjourned 7:25PM**