



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

May 3, 2017 Meeting Notes  
 Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Avenue  
 Room 4901  
 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
 Chair: Holly Griffith  
 Vice-Chair: Quin Apuzzo  
 Secretary: Emily Newcomer

Committee Members	Present?	SPU Staff & Guests	Role
Quinn Apuzzo	Y	Susan Fife-Ferris	Division Director, SPU Solid Waste Planning and Program Management
Anna Dyer	N	Sego Jackson	Solid Waste LOB Liaison
Holly Griffith	Y	Natasha Walker	CAC Program Coordinator
Jamie Lee	Y	Pat Kaufman	Commercial Recycling & Composting Program Manager
Heather Levy	Y	Stephanie Thomas	Green Business Program Manager, Cascadia Consulting
Emily Newcomer	Y	Luis Hillon	SPU Senior Economist
Chris Toman	Y		
Colin Groark	Y		
James Subocz	Y		
Alan Garvey	Y	<b>Guests</b>	
Amelia Fujikawa	Y	Adam Maurer	

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- SWAC Members requested further breakout in the Quarterly Tonnage Report between single-family and Multifamily in the residential category.
- SWAC expressed interest in further presentations on the homeless encampment work.
- SWAC chairs to email SWAC members regarding themes for the Annual Recycling Report letter.
- Pat Kaufman will share Solid Waste tabling opportunities that SWAC members can participate in.

**1. Regular Business**

SWAC Chair, Holly Griffith called the meeting to order at 5:38 PM

- Holly welcomed new members.
- Natasha indicated emergency exits and bathrooms, and provided a brief safety overview
- SWAC Members were not yet ready to approve April meeting notes. They will review following the meeting and provide approval electronically.

**2. Solid Waste Updates**

SPU Solid Waste Planning and Program Management Division Director Susan Fife-Ferris and Solid Waste LOB Liaison, Sego Jackson, provided a few Solid Waste line of business and legislative updates.

- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Homelessness Response Activation.** Susan provided a brief update of the response efforts. She introduced new staff member, Lou Daoust-Filiatraut, who will be leading this effort as well as the Litter Abatement and Encampment Trash Pilots. Susan noted that if SWAC members hear feedback from the community on these clean-ups, to please share that feedback as they have not yet done outreach to see if the community is noticing improvements.
  - o **Committee member comment:** Is Lou the replacement for Aurora?
    - **Answer:** Aurora was serving in an out of class position, and David Hare was filled that position. This is a new temporary position funded through the end of 2018.
- **Solid Waste Plan Update.** SWAC will be involved as it progresses.
- **Long-haul Contract Savings.** SPU is looking at funding some projects that haven't gone through a normal stakeholder process. Seven proposals are being taken to the Mayor's office for consideration. The proposals add up to a little under \$500k, spread out over 2017-2018. Susan said she will go into more detail on the activities involved in these proposals if Council approves them.
- **ReUse Center at North Transfer Station (NTS).** Susan said she hoped to have the details of this worked out before June SWAC meeting.
- **Collection RFP (Request for Proposals).** Draft RFP will go to stakeholders at the end of May for their feedback. External stakeholders will have two weeks to provide feedback on the draft and the final version of the RFP will be put out in the summer. To date, at least 2 contractors are always selected to provide this service.
- **Cascadia Presentation on Seattle Waste & Recycling Trends, Metrics, and Goals.** Cascadia Consulting gave a presentation to SPU's Solid Waste LOB staff. Susan summarized the presentation by saying that the volume of the materials that are recyclable has expanded, but the weight has decreased, and this has generated a lot of internal discussion about how to measure success (currently based on weight). Susan said she envisions SW LOB sponsoring a workshop in the Fall regarding metrics, perhaps with SWAC's involvement, and she would love to see King County and Ecology join in.
- Segog added that SWAC was the genesis of the idea for this presentation. In talking about the presentation with SPU Solid Waste Director Ken Snipes, Ken had requested it for SPU staff. SWAC will get some version of that presentation in the near future; Segog said he will work with SWAC officers on timing (tentatively August or September).
- **Legislation updates.** Segog walked Committee Members through key updates. He noted that the regular session is now concluded and the first special session began. Most bills of interest are probably not going to be acted on yet this year, but will carry over to next year.
  - o **Solar Bill,** which includes producer responsibility stewardship language, is still alive and because it's related to the budget, could still move forward. He noted that if a bill is relative to enacting the budget, there are different rules at play.

- **Coordinated Prevention Grants (CPG).** State budget proposals continue to show a 33% cut to CPG funds, on top of the 50% cut that happened last biennium. Our lobbyist is aware of that and is monitoring.
- **Residential Mailers.** Segó reviewed the SPU materials that have been distributed to residential homes (Curb Waste Times–Spring 2017, and updated “Where Does it Go?” flyer). He solicited comments:
  - **Committee member comment:** I really enjoyed the Curb Waste Times. I thought it was a nice narrative. It dug deep into where things go; connecting the trail for folks. I saved it so I could bore my kids with it.
  - **Question (guest or committee member?):** What is the reason for banning the compostable carry-out bags
    - **Segó:** There is a lot of interest in revisiting that. The whole point was to reduce the use of single-use bags. A compostable bag can clog a storm drain just as easily as a plastic bag.

### 3. Quarterly Tonnage Report; Susan Fife-Ferris

Susan presented the new Quarterly Tonnage Report, with a breakdown of Commercial, Residential, and per household metrics. She briefly reviewed the takeaways from each category:

- **Residential:** Overall tonnage is down 4.4%, primarily due to organics (down 16.3%). Susan guessed this could be because of wet weather (less gardening/mowing), given that the bulk of residential organics is yard waste, not food waste. She said that as soon as the weather changes, she imagined we’d see organics pick back up. Garbage is down a bit, and recycling is up a bit in Q1 (though not as much as we’d like it to be).
- **Pounds per Household** is down significantly. We have a population boom going on. You’ll see a significant dip in organics. She also reiterated that weather could impact this metric.
- **Commercial.** Total tonnage is up a bit (2%), primarily due to organics. Unlike residential, she said organics in the commercial sector is primarily food waste, rather than yard waste. And SPU has been conducting a big commercial push for sorting out food waste.

She reminded Committee Members that these were all anecdotal, and encouraged Committee Members to share their thoughts. She asked Committee Members for their feedback on the format, readability, and usefulness of the updated quarterly report:

- **Committee member comment:** Definitely a vast improvement (from the previous report format). **Would love to see residential broken out between Single-family and Multifamily.**

### 4. Preview of Expected Themes for Annual Recycling Report; Susan Fife-Ferris.

Susan shared draft data for SPU’s Annual Recycling Report. She emphasized that these are draft numbers, and shared the primary takeaways.

#### **Schedule for the Annual Recycling Report and the dates relevant to SWAC:**

- **Mid-May:** Draft Report with semi-final numbers will be shared with Committee Members.

- **June 7 SWAC Meeting:** Susan said they hope to have a Final Draft, which should be similar to the Draft distributed electronically.
  - **End of June:** SWAC letter due, in order to include with the final version of the Annual Report, which goes to the Mayor's office and City Council.
- SWAC secretary, Emily Newcomer, noted that she had already circulated the 2016 letter to SWAC members, just to get SWAC members thinking about what they'd like to see.
  - **Committee member comment:** I appreciate the early review and discussion of this topic. It's something we asked for earlier, and you've done that. The challenge with this letter has always been the sequencing. In the past, when we've gone through this process, we've had a SWAC conversation on where we'd like to see emphasis placed. For example, last year we acknowledged equitable access and the need to focus on Multifamily, and we've seen both of those things bear fruit. I'm curious, where in this timeline do we develop those thoughts and perspectives and talk through those things?
    - **SWAC Secretary:** We have an aggressive timeline. If you were comfortable with the idea, we could get our draft ideas in a letter and incorporate the numbers between now and June 7, so that we have a draft letter on the June 7 meeting that we're comfortable working with.
    - **Answer:** The draft version of the Annual Recycling Report you receive on 5/15 will include what we hope to do in each sector.
    - **SWAC Chair:** Let's take 5-10 minutes to discuss now. We will also send an email out to take a bit more time to talk about the big themes for the letter.

#### Discussion about themes for SWAC Letter

- **Committee member comment:** I see some recurring themes: waste prevention, multi-family, and equitable outreach.
- **Committee member comment:** I have an interest in the measurement conversation. Having seen the Cascadia presentation in the dry run stages, I found it very compelling.
  - **Susan Fife-Ferris, SPU Staff:** The topic of measurement wouldn't be addressed in our recycling report; it will be in the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. If we wanted to change our goals, it would have to be an internal discussion, then go to Mayor's office, and then to Council. At the very least, it would take a couple years before that is approved and signed off.
  - **Committee member comment:** You could say "we want a discussion on what are the right metrics to inform our policies and programmatic decisions to ensure we're diverting as much material out of the waste stream as possible."
- **Committee member comment:** I think this is similar to what we said last year but I'd want to emphasize continued resources for Multifamily. They dipped in tonnage in 2015, but there's obviously a lot of trending upward, whereas single-family is trending down.
  - **Luis Hillon, SPU Staff:** Every five years, we conduct a recycling composition study. It measures the level of contamination in the recycling stream. SPU

consultants are finalizing the (recycling characterization study) report now, but the takeaway at this point is that contamination in recycling in single-family has increased.

- **Susan Fife-Ferris, SPU Staff:** Which is expected in a single-stream recycling program.
- **Committee member comment:** And because a lot of families have been moving here from other locations.
- **Committee member comment:** I want to address the homeless encampments. I don't know the appropriate position to take but I would really value that discussion.
  - **Susan Fife-Ferris, SPU Staff:** I can make a presentation on what we're doing. But it might make more sense to comment in the Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan update.
  - **Sego Jackson, SPU Staff:** I think it's good to be clear that you are commenting on a recycling report, i.e. what you want to be done to increase diversion, and not on general SWAC interests.
  - **Committee member comment:** This is not our only annual opportunity to weigh in on what we want to see emphasis on.
  - **Committee member question:** But we can comment on as many things as we want, yes? I remember last year there was a discussion about the Mayor and cleanup at encampments. This is an important issue. And just not doing something is an issue, which is what was happening last year.
    - **Susan Fife-Ferris, SPU Staff:** Would be happy to come back and talk more about the encampments.
    - **SWAC member consensus was that they would like that.**
  - **Committee member question:** Where does (waste) generation from those encampments live within these numbers?
    - **Susan Fife-Ferris, SPU Staff:** In commercial.

**5. Green Business and Food Plus Outreach: Pat Kaufman, SPU Commercial Recycling & Composting Program Manager and Stephanie Thomas, Green Business Program Manager, Cascadia Consulting**

Pat and Stephanie provided a presentation on:

- Seattle's commercial diversion rates, policies, and partners
- SPU's Green Business Program
- Program strategies: Successful strategies for helping Seattle businesses recycle and compost more.
- Selecting strategies to meet objectives. Shared priorities around increasing the commercial recycling rate, increasing compliance with various solid waste policies, and increasing service equity—expanding our reach to businesses of all sizes and sectors, including small, ethnically-owned and operated businesses.

Stephanie provided an overview of the Green Business Program, which has existed for 20 years and includes SPU's Water, Drainage, Wastewater, Solid Waste Lines of Business and energy conservation assistance with Seattle City Light. Stephanie explained that they employ a variety of strategies to meet multiple objectives and have been meeting quarterly/semi-annually with a stakeholder group since 2009 to check-in on policies and programs. Stephanie and Pat reviewed specific outreach examples, and the process for selecting/prioritizing on-site engagements (including both passive and proactive referrals/targeting). They also reviewed their strategies for increasing service equity. Stephanie said they were looking for SWAC input on where to focus/prioritize their strategies.

- **Committee member comment:** Awesome; love that all this work is happening. Fantastic job!
- **Committee member question:** When your team goes into their site, does your team know that business' data?
  - **Answer:** SPU has their commercial garbage account data, but recycling and composting is free market in Seattle - businesses can choose any provider. We've talked to our contractor community about how great it would be to have but they don't necessarily want to provide that data. If we contact the contractor, they will provide service level information on a business-by-business basis, but not a whole data set.
- **Committee member comment:** With the bag ban, I'm curious if the volume of the bags has decreased. I also hear folks say they use the paper bags for recycling.
  - **Answer:** I don't have a sense. I think a lot of Multifamily like the paper bags because they are easy to pack up and carry down.
  - **Steph:** It highlights how strategies impact sectors (commercial vs residential) differently.
- **Committee member comment:** When I used to work in the restaurant business, I worked for employers who didn't support recycling and composting.
  - **Answer:** We receive a lot of tips from employees via our hotline referral. Now that its required, it's easier to enforce. We can also show the cost savings. This next round of requirements makes it easier to enforce.
- **Committee member comment:** I think [all the strategies] are equally valuable. This presentation highlights how diverse and challenging a piece of the pie is. Having the resources to *re-visit* the businesses that you're reaching out to, given the breadth of businesses you're trying to reach, is important.

#### **What is the sense from SWAC about the level of enforcement on our requirements?**

- **Committee member comment:** Seems like it could use a little work. Tags used to tag garbage containers that have recyclables or organics in them are fantastic. I know we've talked about the fact that virtually no fines have been given, except to maybe some restaurants. I think some businesses could be exploiting the fact that fines are not being used.
  - **Committee member comment:** I'm pretty sure we wrote a letter on this issue.

- **Committee member comment:** But enforcing poses some equity issues.
- **Committee member comment:** If the fine is collected, where does it go?
  - **Susan:** It goes to the Solid Waste Fund.
  - **Pat:** It's a \$250 fine, but it's \$513 once a court fee is added to it. And we have fined several businesses for foam, after several visits.
- **Committee member comment:** I hear complaints from businesses because they want a level playing field; their neighbors aren't complying.
  - **Pat:** I use that line when visiting businesses. May not get a fine, but you're going to see me a lot.
  - **Stephanie:** Though the fine may seem high, some businesses have penciled it out and a fine every couple of months is not as expensive as compliance. Enforcement is also more difficult if you can't see the contamination and/or if the dumpster is shared
- **Committee member comment:** One thing I've noticed is a big challenge when I go to restaurants is if something is wrapped (burrito, gyro, sandwich). Is there any outreach on that? The material ends up in every bin...
  - **Pat:** We just had a stakeholder meeting in March and talked about transition in temporary exemptions to the food service packaging ordinance. There are a lot of packaging products that are exempt. One of them is foil-faced paper wrap. Some restaurants rely on that for heat retention and foil offers memory retention so it doesn't fall apart. At this time, there is not an equally performing compostable option. Waiting for industry to develop a heat-retention wrap.
- **Pat to send tabling event opportunities for SWAC members to consider joining.**

## 6. SWAC Commitment to Public Engagement

Did not take place due to time.

## 7. Around the Table

Did not take place due to time.

**Adjourned 7:30PM**