



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

September 6, 2023, Meeting Summary
Webex
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

*Chair: Brie Kuhn
Co-Chair: Wendy Weiker
Secretary: Michael Johnson*

Committee Members	Present	SPU Staff /Guests	Role
Danny Barksdale	Y	Quinn Apuzzo	SPU – SWAC Program Coordinator
Joe Camero	Y	McKenna Morrigan	SPU – Strategic Advisor, Waste Prevention & Product Stewardship
Brie Kuhn	Y	Jeff Fowler	SPU – Deputy Director, Solid Waste Line of Business
Michael Johnson	N	Angela Wallace	SPU – Development Review Supervisor
Chelsey Evans	Y	Stephanie Schwenger	SPU – Solid & Hazardous Waste Lead Planner
John Martin	N	Andrew Lee	SPU – General Manager/CEO
Erin Gagnon	Y	Susan Fife-Ferris	SPU – Director, Solid Waste Planning & Program Management
Aleema Gray	Y	Katie Lynd	SPU – Community Engagement Program Manager
Logan Harvey	Y	McKenna Morrigan	SPU – Strategic Advisor, Waste Prevention & Product Stewardship
Caitlin Singer	Y	Diana Wadley	Guest - Ecology
Wendy Weiker	N	Matt Waymire	Guest - Ridwell
Steven Walls	N	Athena Burk Bravo	Guest – Trash Talk Project
Yongkang (YK) Zhou	Y	Heather Trim	Guest – Zero Waste WA
		Joshua Messer	Guest - CHMM
		Matt Waymire	Guest - Ridwell

1. Welcome & Introductions

- SWAC Chair Brie called the meeting to order at 4:07pm
- SWAC Member and guests introduced themselves and shared what they were looking forward to about the fall.
- Andrew Lee, Jeff Fowler, and Susan Fife-Ferris introduced themselves and welcomed the new SWAC members.

2. Comments on the Solid Waste Line of Business Updates for SWAC

- Updates were provided to the committee in writing in advance of the meeting. Jeff Fowler was present to answer questions and shared additional updates on solid waste operational highlights.

3. SWAC Charter Overview

- Quinn provided an overview of SWAC's Charter including the purpose of the committee, member roles, and outcomes.

4. SWAC Comments on the Draft 2022 Waste Prevention & Recycling Report

SWAC members discussed their comments and questions and provided feedback on the draft annual report. Chair Brie shared the process for the development of SWAC's letter in response to the report, which will be included with the final Waste Prevention & Recycling Report and shared with City Council later this fall. SWAC Officers will include feedback gathered at the meeting to develop a draft letter and members will be able to include additional comments in response to the draft via email. The timeline for developing and finalizing the letter is as follows:

- 9/12: Deadline for initial member comments due to Brie
- 9/20: Brie will share the draft letter with SWAC members via email
- 9/25: Brie will send the draft letter to Quinn for review
- 9/27: Brie will send the final letter with Officer signatures to Quinn
- 9/29: SPU submits report & letter to Council
- 10/2: Brie will send SWAC's letter to Council (for additional emphasis)

Below is a summary of SWAC's discussion and comments:

- **Mixed-Use Buildings:** SWAC members discussed how to categorize mixed-use buildings that combine both residential and commercial spaces. Members and SPU Staff discussed challenges in distinguishing between commercial and residential waste when they coexist in the same building. Staff explained that in Seattle, mixed-use developments are required to have separate garbage receptacles for commercial and residential tenants. Generally, businesses in mixed-use buildings have their own waste services.
- **Self-Hauling Waste:** The discussion then shifted to self-hauled waste, where individuals or third-party haulers transport waste materials to transfer stations. It was noted that businesses often bring all their waste to one location, making it difficult to separate commercial and residential waste in the data.
- **Engagement with the Community:** Members suggested including data on how the city engaged with different community sectors over the past year. This information could help align strategies and decisions based on community involvement.
- **Detailed Breakdown of Commercial Waste:** SWAC Members expressed interest in having a more detailed breakdown of commercial waste by business type, such as offices, restaurants, event spaces, and more. This data could inform specific strategies based on the types of businesses generating waste.
- **Data Availability:** The availability of detailed data on waste generation by business type was discussed. It was mentioned that the program team is working on gathering this data to better understand waste generation patterns in the commercial sector.
- **Challenges in Commercial Sector Data:** SWAC members and staff discussed the challenges in obtaining accurate data for the commercial sector, especially since businesses have the flexibility to choose their waste service providers.
- **Future Data Analysis:** Participants expressed interest in future data analysis that would provide insights into waste generation patterns among different types of businesses, which could be valuable for waste reduction efforts.

5. Residential Customer Survey Results

Katie Lynd and Angela Wallace shared an overview of the Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey results, customer insights, and next steps. The primary objective of the project was to understand customer satisfaction, identify strategies to reduce contamination and increase diversion and gain insights into customers' sorting knowledge, barriers, and access to services.

Survey Methodology:

- The team contracted with an analytics and survey consultant.
- An online survey was conducted, with invitations sent to around 60,000 customers.
- Language line and translation services were used to facilitate responses in multiple languages.

Demographic Analysis:

- Graphics were used to reduce language barriers and prioritize audiences in certain geographic areas and communities of color.
- Response demographics included factors such as ethnicity, gender, and household income.
- The results reflected a diverse set of respondents.

Customer Satisfaction Results:

- Customers expressed high satisfaction with Seattle Public Utilities' services, with recycling and compost receiving higher satisfaction scores than garbage services.

Areas for Improvement:

- Participants shared insights into specific areas for improvement, such as cleaner areas after garbage service and the return of carts to their original positions.
- Pet waste composting was also suggested as an option to increase satisfaction.

Awareness of Sorting:

- Participants discussed customers' awareness of where materials should be sorted.
- While most customers correctly identified where to place items, there were still misconceptions about plastics, plastic wrap, and plastic bags.

Barriers to Recycling and Composting:

- Customers generally found recycling and composting easy.
- Key barriers included language and communication challenges, with some respondents expressing difficulty accessing information.

Next Steps:

- Next steps will include analyzing the data further to identify trends and develop strategies for improving recycling and composting efforts.
- The survey provided valuable insights into customer satisfaction with recycling and composting services, highlighted areas for improvement, and emphasized the importance of continued education and communication with customers.
- SPU is working to increase awareness of SPU's Recycling App – "Recycle IT".

6. Around the Table

- **A SWAC Member shared:** WM is hosting an upcoming virtual tour on October 27 from 12-1pm: <https://www.wmnorthwest.com/recyclingcenters/virtualltour.htm>
- **A SWAC Member shared:** Recology's Artist in Residence Reception is on September 8. [Artist in Residence - Recology King County: Seattle](#)

- **A Guest shared:** Trash Talk Project, a nonprofit focused on educating King County residents about waste sorting guidelines, is seeking collaboration opportunities. Learn more at: trashtalkprojectwa.com
- **A Guest from Ecology shared:**
 - The City of Seattle Solid Waste Management Plan is available here: <https://app.box.com/s/ru394mywiuywyfna6xcnnnv2ay2a3x4h>.
 - Ecology's overall Planning and Waste Reduction Resource Library is available here: <https://app.box.com/s/r6jdrswnwchuo9kme3qa4gdf2uawhfk>
 - The Waste Reduction and Recycling Education (WRRED) grant program provides funding to qualified local governments and nonprofit organizations for local or statewide education programs designed to help the public with litter control, waste reduction, recycling, composting, or contamination reduction. Grant award limit: \$80,000. Apply Sept. 5-Oct. 3, 2023. <https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/payments-contracts-grants/grants-loans/find-a-grant-or-loan/wrred>
 - The Waste Not Washington School Awards promote sustainability and reward school efforts to reduce waste, recycle, and teach environmental curriculum. Grant award limit: \$5,000. Apply now – Oct. 31, 2023. <https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/our-programs/solid-waste-management/waste-not-washington-school-awards>.
- **SPU Staff shared:**
 - SWAC's next meeting will be on October 4 from 11am-1pm and SWAC will be touring Recology's Material Recovery Facility.
 - SWAC members are invited to a Solid Waste 101 Training on September 27 at 1pm with SPU's Susan Fife-Ferris. Additional details will be shared later this week.