



SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

February 28, 2024, Kick Off Meeting Summary
11:00 am – 1:00 am

*Chair: Aleema Gray
Co-Chair: Joe Camero
Secretary: Caitlin Singer*

Committee Members	Present	SPU Staff /Guests	Role
Joe Camero	Y	Quinn Apuzzo	SPU – SWAC Program Coordinator
Chelsey Evans	Y	McKenna Morrigan	SPU – Strategic Advisor, Waste Prevention & Product Stewardship
Erin Gagnon	Y	Kate Kurtz	SPU- Lead, Organics & Natural Yard Care
Aleema Gray	Y	Katie Kennedy	SPU- Lead, Construction & Demolition Materials
Caitlin Singer	Y	Katie Lynd	SPU – Lead Planner, Solid Waste
Wendy Weiker	Y	McKenna Morrigan	SPU – Strategic Advisor, Waste Prevention & Product Stewardship
Steven Walls	N	Diana Wadley	Guest - Ecology
Yongkang (YK) Zhou	N		

1. Welcome & Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 11:08. Members, staff, and guests introduced themselves.

- Diana Wadley from the Department of Ecology provided a brief overview of RCW 70A.205.110 and SWAC’s role in state and local solid waste planning.
- SPU Staff spoke about the recently adopted 2022 Solid Waste Plan Update and the importance of SWAC in representing community perspectives in the development and implementation of programs and policies. Staff described 5 Priority Focus Areas from the 2022 Plan Update. The Focus Areas are a distillation of over 40 recommendations outlined in the Solid Waste Plan. They are as follows:

5 Focus areas

- Food Waste Reduction
- Contamination Reduction
- Waste Prevention
- Responsible Recycling
- Regulatory / Code Compliance

2. SWAC 2024 Work Plan Charette

SWAC Members were divided into small conversation groups and rotated through the five Focus Area stations. Members were offered two discussion prompts: "What is your connection and/or interest in this area?" and "How could SWAC help advance this area?" At each station, groups discussed as well as documented comments and questions on topics of particular interest. Following small group discussions, SWAC reconvened to share insights and discuss individual priorities for SWAC’s 2024 work plan.

- **A SWAC Member** expressed the need for continued education to bridge the communication gap in communities that may not be well-versed in recycling best practices and sustainability. They have observed that there are many communities that may not understand or read the recycling policies due to language barriers and the need for translators.
- **A SWAC Member** expressed that King County no longer accepts soft plastics like film for recycling. A centralized area for recycling this type of plastic is needed.
- **A SWAC Member** expressed that community engagement in food waste reduction, contamination, and waste prevention should include voices that represent small and medium-sized businesses, such as business improvement districts and individual businesses. This is where SWAC will play a vital role in bringing the community aspect to these efforts. The member also observed that the burden of waste reduction should not solely rest on communities and individuals. Instead, it would be helpful to explore other outlets, such as retail distributors, to address the issue of waste and reduce the burden on individuals and communities.
- **A SWAC Member** expressed the need to promote local end markets more actively. Although community-wide participation in recycling programs is high, local end-markets are often forgotten. It was suggested that the enforcement or other measures be considered in support of local end-markets.
- **A SWAC Member** expressed that many discussions have focused on community engagement. What role could or should SWAC play in support of Seattle's zero waste goals? Information and engagement can be more impactful when delivered by a friend or someone you are connected to. This would help communities better understand policies around recycling and composting, etc.
- **A SWAC Member** expressed that this is a multifaceted issue, so we need to help people adopt the right behaviors at home and work. Additionally, we need to collaborate with our partners to ensure compliance and code updates. It's essential to be mindful of what is achievable, as the costs will ultimately fall on people at home and work. We must ensure that our messaging is clear so our communities fully understand how to properly dispose of materials.
- **A SWAC Member** mentioned that there are several free programs with great messages that companies are unaware of. Consistent promotion of these programs would be helpful.
- **A SWAC Member** expressed that we should consider engaging with people in other cities or states and mentoring select communities. We are making progress, but how can we be transparent about the process and the challenges we face? By sharing what we are learning, we can help other cities because Seattle has a wealth of information in this work.

Next Step/Updates

- No SWAC meeting in March.
- Working with the officer team to develop a draft work plan.