

SPU Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)



November 6, 2024, Meeting Summary
5:30 am – 7:30 am

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

Committee Members	Present	SPU Staff /Guests	Role
Joe Camero	Y	Casey Colley	SPU – SWAC Program Coordinator
Melanie Cover	Y	Stephanie Schwenger	SPU- Planning, Performance & Analytics Manager
Tareq Fayyad	Y	Veronica Fincher	SPU- Waste Prevention Planning and Grants
Aleema Gray	Y	Fatima Krubally	SPU- Administrative Staff Analyst
Caitlin Singer	Y	Katie Jerauld	Guest-Ecology
Wendy Weiker	N	Katie Swanson	SPU – Solid Waste Lead Planner
Lisa Watkins	N	Liz Fikas	SPU-Senior Waste Prevention Planner Manager
Alissa Campbell	Y		
Shelly Crocker	Y		
Erin Gagnon	N		
Paige Madden	Y		
Chelsey Evans	Y		
Yongkang (YK) Zhou	Y		
Karia Wong	Y		

Action Items

- Aleema/Casey to get a poll going about interest in tours.
- Casey - anonymize October meeting notes before posting online.
- Joe to look for a platform for SWAC swap
- Caitlin - SWAC letter
- SWAC members - review, edit, update letter

SPU Updates (Jeff Fowler)

- Working to get monthly updates from SPU teams for SWAC
- Pam Johnson from Hazardous Waste Program update
 - Supporting legislation requiring producer responsibility around EV batteries
 - Ban on lead and aviation gas
 - Actively engaging on rulemaking to implement 2023 battery EPR bill
 - Look to support for toxic-free cosmetic laws

- Continuing communication around battery ban - yet another fire at the station last week. Too common!
- Landfill updates
 - Two closed LFs in Kent - Kent Highlands and Midway Landfill
 - Their offices are in Kent - working on security upgrades at that facility, e.g. cameras, fencing
 - Just submitted their EPA-required 5-year review (2019-2024). Submitted, waiting for feedback.
 - They will discuss any new requirements at the landfills
- Capital Program
 - One large project that's across the street from the South Transfer Station (old South Transfer Station)
 - Used for truck staging. Now working on closing the landfill underneath that - South Park Landfill.
 - Need to replace tipping floor at active South Transfer Station - replacing it in August.
 - Will likely need to close S TS for self-haul - disruptive - 2-3 weeks.
 - Likely re-direct to Bow Lake TS (King County owned)
 - 2 new compactors at North Transfer Station - sometime between March and July.
 - Already being built, looking for contractors to install.
 - South Transfer Station will get replacement contractors next.
 - Lifespan of a compactor = 10-12 years

Review & Approve October Meeting Notes (Aleema Gray)

- Approve (9)
 - Aleema Gray (Chair)
 - Joe Camero (Vice Chair)
 - Caitlin Singer (Secretary)
 - YK Zhou
 - Shelly Crocker
 - Chelsey Evans
 - Karia Wong
 - Paige Madden
 - Melanie Coerver
- Nay/Abstain (0)

Charter Amendments (Aleema Gray)

- 2025 SWAC Meeting Decisions
- 100% participation on survey to review future meeting cadence
- Day/time to meet (keep the same): Wednesdays 5:30-7p
- Frequency (change): Meeting every other month starting in 2025
 - Ad-hoc meetings may be added on a case-by-case basis
- Subcommittees: opted out
 - We will discuss topics as a larger group rather than splitting into subgroups
 - Will be flexible to break out into smaller groups if needed/interested
- Will submit these changes to the charter and submit to SPU for approval. Expecting approval by the end of the year or at the start of the new year.

- SWAC member asks: how will this change what topics are prioritized?
 - SPU staff response: less informational sessions, more interactive
- SWAC member suggests field trips for SWAC members
 - SPU staff response: we have a field trip to the South Transfer Station
 - Dec 13 or Jan 24 - some time between 3p-5:30p.
 - Could also coordinate with WM, Republic, and Recology facilities for tours with SWAC members as leads.
 - A SWAC member suggests a visit to Cedar Grove and a landfill as well.
- Aleema/Casey to get a poll going about interest in tours.

SPU Food Waste Prevention Discovery Project (Liz Fikejs + Global Impactive Collective)

- Global Impact Collective (GIC) is fairly new, launched early in 2024, about 9 employees, focused on food industries.
- SPU partnering with GIC to coordinate individual and focus groups targeting consumer-facing food businesses and residential homes in Seattle.
- Helping prevent food waste by framing food as a way of building community.
- Goal: determine whether businesses and institutions can serve as messengers to consumers, and conversely, whether consumers can influence businesses and institutions to prevent food waste.
- Roughly 20% of food waste gets into residential and commercial garbage.
- Specifically interested in food waste prevention versus donation or composting.
- Goals:
 - Test the notion of food as a community connector
 - Identify who should be at the table to discuss creative ways of engaging various audiences in food waste prevention
 - Brainstorm partnerships/opportunities that could be used to bring community together in preventing food.
- Already completed desk research and key informant interviews phases
- Currently in community engagement/listening sessions phase (Oct-Dec)
- Jan: insights to action workshop
- Feb: Final report
- SWAC member comment: In Asian culture, food is not necessarily seen as a connector, but more as a necessity for survival. Looked at how to promote messaging about preventing food waste by tying to environmental footprints. For example, when you waste a hardboiled egg, you're also wasting the cups of water that were used to boil that egg. Also did a meal planning exercise of a limited budget and maximizing the number of meals to get out of that budget. Suggests: framing the message in a culturally-relevant way. Also framing the environmental and financial cost of food waste. Different cultures have different views of food. Many immigrants came to the U.S. because they are thinking about future generations. They are already forward-thinking.
- GIC asks: who is the best messenger to reach different cultures?
 - SWAC member responds: it's important to understand the culture in order to tailor the message.
 - GIC responds: needs to be education among community groups to message this appropriately for their community members.

- SWAC member suggests: P-Patch. Participants spent a lot of time growing food and understand the value of food.
- SWAC member suggests: Beacon Food Forest. City Fruit. Out for Sustainability Group. Out in Climate. Inspired by a workshop led by a local chef, Renee Erickson, who made the less-used food components more appealing, e.g. carrot top pesto.
- SWAC member suggests: maybe airlines or travel companies could send a reminder before your trip: got fresh produce that's going to go bad while you're away? Here's what you could do with it? Alternatively, what to do with food you overbuy when you're visiting a new place. Airbnb or hotels could facilitate that.
- SPU staff suggests: Food shows or Taste of Seattle messaging, outreach, or Expo to highlight those trickier to use food components (carrot tops).
- Connecting businesses to businesses to use waste from one business that other business (or residents) can use. E.g. coffee grounds for home gardens. Brewery spent grain to bakery.
- GIC asks: how does Amazon monitor back-of-house waste stream? Forecasting, looking at trends. Employees do pay for food (which promotes accountability, reduces waste).
- SWAC member suggests: schools, hospitals
- SWAC member suggests: education as schools, e.g. the work that goes into growing food and all the people and processes needed to get that food to your plate.
- SWAC member suggests: culturally-relevant food at schools to reduce waste.
- SWAC member suggests: in school, there was an area for kids to place extra food on a table for others to take. Toward the end of the school day, cafeteria staff would lay it out on the table to take home.
- SWAC member suggests: chef content creators on instagram educating that you can still eat lettuce that isn't at peak, heads of vegetables, kale stems, chicken stock from bones, etc. Engaging with younger generation through social media, partnering with chefs and content creators.
- SWAC member suggests: farmers markets promote the relationship between growers and buyers.
- SWAC member suggests: CSAs - Boldly Grown Farms (Skagit) does a great job promoting farm-to-table.
- SWAC member suggests: Viva Farms
- SWAC member suggests: Climate Pledge Arena to be less "food" focused audiences.

Waste Prevention Planning (Veronica Fincher)

- Previously discussed
 - Where waste prevention should go and where to go next
- Now have draft deliverables of waste prevention goals and guiding principles, and prioritization criteria and process.
- Prioritization process will be tested out next year to see if any adjustments are needed
- Draft goals (concepts)
 - Prevent waste and reduce negative environmental and public health impacts - less consumption, eliminating single-use
 - Pursue strategies and enforce policies that address the largest producers and generators of waste and environmental and public health impacts (extended producer responsibility)

- Grow Seattle's waste prevention ethic/culture (through strategies such as storytelling, education, etc.)
- Make it easier for customers to prevent waste (including through connecting and empowering communities)
- Grow Seattle's waste prevention economy and workforce (job creation)
- Deliver equitable benefits
- Align SPU rates and fees to incentivize waste minimization (with affordability lens for small businesses and residents)
- Prevent waste within City facilities and operations
- Draft guiding principles (10)
 - Highlights from SWAC:
 - shared responsibility - not all just on consumer-base
 - No single approach, everything happens in parallel. Different leverage points.
 - Micro-communities, hyper-local
 - Positive, joy-oriented language and motivations. Motivation through storytelling and making people feel good, energized.
- SPU will go back to the community (and SWAC) for feedback.
- Feedback on this prioritization - SWAC members can provide via email to Veronica.
- Prioritization process, must:
 - Be in SPU's realm and align with goals?
 - Meet criteria and decide if it's a priority and how to resource
- What criteria should SPU use to decide prioritization?
 - SWAC member asks: practically, what are the most likely factors that decide what gets implemented?
 - SPU staff: right now focusing on what they've heard from community, and then they will test. For example, shared responsibility - if SPU is already doing something that is already consumer-focused education project, not doing anything focused on producers - should focus on producers. How are we balancing across different goals and leveraging different strategies?
 - SWAC member suggests: some evaluation for criteria and success is who we are currently partnered with. Leveraging existing connections. Is it possible for SPU to serve as a partner for other organizations to maintain good ideas, programs, values. And to share the responsibility with organizations who are more focused on certain resources and have leverage SPU doesn't.
 - SWAC member suggests: staff time is certainly a limiting resource.
 - SWAC member suggests: enforcement
 - SWAC member suggests: information should be available in a way that is accessible and culturally relevant so that people can actually participate, with a call to action piece.
 - SWAC member asks: how to balance between low-hanging fruit and riskier projects that could have a bigger impact (but could be harder to implement).
 - SWAC member asks: what about timeline? Longer timeline projects may be harder to implement.
- What role do you see for community in this process? Who should SPU engage and how?
- SPU folks are meeting later this month to discuss this feedback.
- Veronica can come back in Feb or March for more feedback.

WP&RR - Comment Letter (Caitlin Singer)

- Share first draft
- Gather additional comments
- Discuss next steps and deadlines
 - Nov 6 mtg (today!): First draft ready! Final thoughts to incorporate.
 - Nov 12: final SWAC comments.
 - Nov 15: final draft of letter.
 - Nov 18: Final comments due.
 - Nov 23: Finalize comment letter.
 - Dec 4: Send final comment letter.

SWAC Comments (Joe Camero)

- BuyNothing type group within SWAC committee to freely exchange.
- Could swap at SWAC meetings.
- WhatsApp group?
- Emphasize offloading as well as asking for.
- Joe to look for a platform.
- 11/17 Community Walk at Bridal Trails Park at 1:30pm.
- Sustainable Gift Wrapping - Recology stores have workshops to use textiles as wrap.
 - 12/23 Bothell
 - 12/8 Burien
 - 12/14 Issaquah

Public Comments

- Katie (Ecology): public participation grant (PPG) opens Jan 7-Feb 4 providing funding to individuals and NPOs to increase public understanding and involvement of cleaning up sites and improving waste management practices.
- Ecology developing new rule about EPR in battery recycling. Can review document, open for public comment period through Nov 17.