

APPROVED

Skagit County
Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Microsoft Teams Meeting Minutes
Skagit County Conference Room, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon, WA
Tuesday November 8, 2022

Members Present

Andy Hanson
Leo Jacobs
Marcella Manibusan
Margo Gillaspy
Matt Koegel
Nick Harbert
Olivia Carros
Scott Thomas
Todd Reynolds
Torrey Lautenbach

Representing

City of Mount Vernon
City of Sedro-Woolley, SWAC Vice-Chair
Waste Management, Hauler/Public Sector, Manager
Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste Division, ex-officio
City of Anacortes, SWAC Chair
Waste Management, Hauler
Department of Ecology, Regional Planner & Grant Manager
Town of La Conner
Skagit Steel & Recycling, Recyclers
Lautenbach Recycling, District 1 Citizen

Members Absent

Brian Dempsey
Britt Pfaff-Dunton
Robert Rutledge
Tamara Thomas
Not Represented
Not Represented

Representing

City of Burlington
Skagit County Health Department, ex-officio
Waste Management, Hauler
District 2 Citizens
District 3 Citizens
Agriculture Representative

Visitors

Callie Martin
Dale Patrick
Eddie Nersten

Heather Lopes
Pinky Vargas

Representing

Skagit County Public Works/Solid Waste Division
Environmental Public Health, Skagit County Public Works
Skagit County Public Works/Transfer Station Manager/Solid Waste

Environmental Public Health, Skagit County Public Works
Republic Services, Municipal Relations,
Skagit County Account Manager

Introductions

Margo Gillaspy, requested introductions of all in attendance. Names and business titles were offered by each attendee prior to addressing agenda items.

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Call to Order

Ms. Gillaspy, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. at the Skagit County Conference Room, Mount Vernon, Washington.

Public Comments

Ms. Gillaspy, opened the floor for public comments.

There were no Public Comments.

Review and Approve Minutes

Ms. Gillaspy opened the floor to discuss the August 18, 2022 minutes.

Ms. Gillaspy, requested a Motion to Approve the August 18, 2022 minutes as written.

A Motion to Approve was made by Leo Jacobs, City of Sedro-Woolley to approve the minutes as written. The Motion to Approve was seconded by Andy Hansen, City of Mount Vernon. By a vote of the Membership, the Motion was unanimously passed. Ms. Gillaspy, declared the minutes of August 18, 2022 to be approved as written.

Agenda Items

A Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting, open to the public, was held on November 8, 2022 for anyone to speak on any topic on the agenda, or items not listed on the agenda:

a. Transfer Station Operations

The following is an update on the bin situation, opening status and general floor operations.

The last closure took place on October 31, 2022, due to full capacity on the tipping floor. We experienced a shortage of bins along with no rail service available on that Friday. The Transfer Station received an exceptional amount of garbage on that same Friday, receiving 530 tons; an unusual amount for the month of October.

In a future attempt to continue commercial service, the Transfer Station will close for service for self-haulers prior to reaching capacity. This is the answer to the capacity situation for the present time until the railroad bin issue is resolved. There are 7 chassis on site at the Transfer Station, but when no bins are delivered at the rail spur, that is the issue. There is no available room on-site to store more than the 7 chassis. Typically, the weekly supply of bins run out about noon time, and as a result, the backlog is always full. The worse shortages typically happen on Fridays with no train, or a late delivery. Not

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much can be loaded on Friday so any incoming stacks up all weekend, which results in a completely full tipping floor on Monday.

Shutting down to self-haulers on Sunday would have left more room for Commercial. Luckily, Commercial was spaced out enough that we were able to accept Commercial without too much delay. This is all the Transfer Station can do at the moment until the situation changes and will close earlier to the self-hauler to allow the Commercial haulers to continue to come in.

The number one cause of the back-up is due to the lack of rail cars. In addition, there seems to be staffing issues at the railroad, causing difficulty in getting the trains to the Transfer Station.

Snohomish County appears to have more bins available. Snohomish has a backlog of two days' worth on the ground.

The Skagit County Transfer Station does not have any backlog. The Transfer Station is not getting the containers at the rail spur.

Republic has ordered more containers but have not been delivered at this time. The Transfer Station has available staff on Saturdays to load but may not have an operator at the rail spur, or, might not have bins on a Saturday either. Ideally, what we like to do is have our 7 empties by Friday so then they can load those throughout the weekend and take them off on Monday and have the floor empty on Monday, or at least functional. So that when Commercial starts rolling in on Monday morning, the system works.

It seems the same situation happened some years ago, and we were told that Republic/Rebanco ordered more bins. When can we get a supply here on the ground, and why haven't we done this the last time they said they would get us extra bins.

The original bins should have been here in December of 2020. There are 150 in China. China would not ship them to us because of freight limitations due to being empty. They would not ship empty containers here, because shipping is a premium. Nothing can be put inside of them due to having a certain lining for retail goods in these. Those were put on a barge and are due to arrive here in December. In the meantime, another order was placed with Waste Quip, a company based in the USA, with an expected dated of August. Five were received of the 150 on order. Forty are expected to be delivered next week, with the remaining expected to be delivered at the end of December. We were told many times that they should be here and yes, passed that same information on to the Transfer Station. Skagit, Island and others all need containers. BNSF has had some labor challenges. A uni-train was built in Everett.. Sometimes breaking it apart and sending it to Skagit and to Sumas has been the challenge. They run out of hours in the day, so the uni-trains are not built. So unfortunately, Skagit is not always given their cars on time because BNSF closes for the day. One of the biggest lessons learned is that we can't be dependent on BNSF to build the uni-trains, which is a big problem. We are currently working with Snohomish County to do an expansion. Out leg should be completed

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within the year. That should be able to pull in longer trains. The goal is within two years we are hoping to be able to purchase a main track from BNSF, allowing us to build our own uni-trains in order to eliminate any future delays. Between supply chain issues with the containers and with BNSF labor, it has been very uncomfortable for all of you in Skagit County. We totally recognize that and wish there were a better explanation. The containers are coming from China on barge; the others are coming from Waste Quip on rail.

Once the containers get to Everett, there is a stall. But even getting them to Everett is sometimes a challenge. When the employee's day is over, that train stops wherever it is when that happens.

An addition concern involves the growth with others needing containers. There needs to be more space at the spur to get a reserve. We can only put in 30 cans maximum in the whole rail spur. The Skagit County Transfer Station can easily load 25 on Monday. Island and Lautenbach needs some. There needs to be a bigger spur to have more reserve.

There are tentative drawings for expansion in Burlington. They cannot move forward until the RFP is done to put money into that expansion. Roosevelt will get another line. Everett, Centrallia, Sumas and Burlington is planned for expansion to be less dependent on the reliance of all the extra trucking and switches from BNSF. Advance notice is a big part of the challenge.

The Transfer Station has to deal with a spur of the moment situation of all of a sudden we have to prepare to say we are going to close to the public, which is how it happened last time. We can't give a reopen date, because we don't want to say we are when we don't know when. It has been a day-by-day journey.

How do we make immediate corrections on the ground at the Transfer Station for the haulers that are coming in in order to prevent minimal closures or slow downs in operations. This is a long-term solution, but daily we need an immediate solution on the ground from an operations stand point. We appreciate you Eddie with your communication in reaching out at 6:30 a.m. and is a lot different then calling at 11:30 a.m. when we are ready to transport 80 tons to you. The drivers have some concerns as to how do we make corrections immediately on the ground to accommodate everyone who uses the Transfer Station Facility. Our main goal needs to be getting Commercial haulers in as much as we can and as quickly as we can, versus the public Side.

There is so much more going on beyond what the Commercial drivers see, so we can't just designate one part Commercial and one spot self-hauler. An immediate temporary fix would be for the Transfer Station to have a couple trucks hauling out every day since we run out of cans at noon. More often that not Everett has them but we go to Burlington. They are sitting there in Burlington, we can see them sitting there, but we don't have them. We need at least a couple of trucks everyday hauling out of our site. This would be the quickest solution – we need to get the garbage out of there. We need

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to get cans but the only way to get the cans is at the rail spur. If they are not there, but most often at Everett, we need them trucked up. They need to have them every day, at least 2 trucks. Republic is in charge of that portion. I feel this would be an immediate fix.

Republic does not have a common contract with the Transfer Station and only has the rail, which is completely separate. Everett is also sharing with Island County now. Everett's supply has been going up and down since they have the same challenges, so they are not always available to put it on there. If we take containers from here and try to put them on the Everett train and there's not enough room for the Everett containers as well. There is no solution on that right now. Porter, in charge of rail operations, has been discussing options and solutions since the answer is not so straight forward.

The rail system has been very efficient for the 30 years until last year where we all got turned upside down.

It is not as easy as saying we will get 4 trucking companies to transport from Skagit to Everett and bring containers back.

Everett needs to continue. There has been an emergency situation with Everett when they've been short of containers. There was an emergency swap agreement with King County, which was very complicated. The contract allowed 8 trucks a day to King County. The agreement was that we're taking waste from King County to Roosevelt, and sent trucks to King County to remove some of their residual waste. The contract had to be re-done every 30 days.

What is the next immediate option that helps on the ground at the Transfer Station. We are having trouble with rail-cars and we transport with trucking companies to keep the flow going. If a container or two can be sent to the Transfer Station that helps the Transfer Station not close is what needs to be worked out. Permission from Everett is needed in order to do that. Everett is very understanding of the situation that has been going on here and has been collaborative as regards to we are all in this together attitude.

When the Transfer Station closes to the public, self-haulers do the 3 large doors remain open for commercial trucks. The small doors are not physically closed but are used to push the commercial garbage.

Long Term Plan

The Transfer Station

There are currently no long-term plans for expansion of the Facility. The rail spur will need to increase. This will not be included in the RFP since the County does not have nay control over the rail spur. The land /property does not belong to the County. We can ask for the service but cannot say that the rail spur has to expand since we can't control it. It's about the service level that will be addressed in the RFP.

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Expansion

At present, as long as the Transfer Station has containers, we can load 1 container every 20 minutes. We can move the garbage out and keep it out if we have the necessary needed containers. The building is plenty big enough and has adequate staff to move the garbage out. The problem is not with the size of the building but lies with the lack of supply of containers.

At this time, there is not an expected allotment of ordered containers being reserved for the Transfer Station. Many other services are waiting for some as well as the Transfer station. When the Transfer Station was built, the agreement was having 3 commercial bays available, but there are only 2 available on that side of the building. When a small business commercial account occupies a commercial bay and takes an excess of 5 minutes plus to un-tarp a truck, it can cause a 30-minute interruption in efficiency in getting other commercial accounts serviced as quickly as possible. These small haulers should have the ability to use the small doors, even if they need to wait a couple of more minutes to do so.

There are a lot of things occurring on the floor during the day, but the Transfer Station can improve on that by having trucks un-tarp before backing into the commercial doors. There are circumstances that occur that are unforeseen and cause more delays. The residential side doors are often damaged by self-haulers due to too much garbage on the floor and inadequate space to operate and so they hit the overhead doors.

Contractors often us up valuable floor time. Some require a jump due to a dead battery, or some loose power and need our assistance because they have no battery. When that happens, they are no longer getting in and out of the doors quickly and ultimately cause delays for the commercial trucks. It is agreed that the tarp process for trucks can be improved. If contractors are going to use the big commercial doors, they need to be far enough ahead, un-tarp, and when it's clear, back in and not sit in the middle of the parking lot in the way.

It is requested that the Transfer Station keep the roofing contractors dumps to one side of the bays if possible due to extensive tire damage and repairs. If the roofers could be asked to wait just a couple of minutes in order to place them as close to the pile as possible so their load is pushed less across the floor, it helps commercial from an operation standpoint.

The Transfer Station just added a new piece of equipment. A front broom for the loaders is now being used to sweep the area of the tipping floor, especially the commercial floor area. Nails damage and expense have been an ongoing problem for staff as well. The broom addition is the latest of many attempts to resolve the nail damage issue, for staff and customers. Currently staff is being trained on using the new broom. A new sweeper is expected to come on board next year.

Hanging magnets were tried at one point but was not successful. Because of the little dips in the asphalt, the sweeper with the magnet would hit a dip and loose the nails off

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the magnet. The sweeper would flatten all its tires from the trail of nails. A magnet was attached to the forklift and worked pretty well since it can't get a float. The same scenario happened when it hit a dip on the floor, it wiped the nails off the magnet.

When a Transfer Station shut-down takes place, the Transfer Station closes to all public self-haulers. The Transfer Station remains open only to Commercial trucks and Waste Management. If a closure takes place again, language addressing curbside collection should not be affected and can be added to the press release. As many residential customers as possible should be encouraged to have curbside service versus visits to the Transfer Station. Residential customers should be getting their service from Municipal services.

Waste Management services

Waste Management services unincorporated areas of the County. There are often times that customers are confused as to who to call. Customers should call their City, and the calls would go to their Public Works Department. They are told that the Blue cans are for recycling and are operated by Waste Management.

b. Compost Procurement Ordinance

This is part of the Organics Management Bill that was signed in March. The Department of Ecology just published a fact sheet with Compost in October. Jurisdictions will have to adopt a Compost Procurement Ordinance that talks about how they are going to buy compost, what the factors they are going to look at, and that they are actually going to report it to the Department of Ecology. The County needs to adopt an Ordinance, and so do the Cities. There are different ways to do that. A city with over a 25,000 population, or if you already have curbside collection of organics, must report.

The Skagit County has a drafted Ordinance stating that any kind of Public Works project or Park & Recreation project, compost will be looked at and prices will be compared to see if compost can be worked in that situation. It will look at any extra environmental benefits of compost that might be available and consider buying it for the project

The Cities need to adopt the Ordinance as well. The Ordinance needs to be adopted by January 1, 2023. The City can adopt their own, or piggy-back on the County through an Interlocal Agreement.

It is not mandatory to subscribe, it is mandatory to have it as a service for residences. It is for businesses. In 2027, it will be mandatory for residents.

The Commercial businesses that generate organic waste, 8 yards, are required to; possibly sooner than 2027.

The meeting with the Solid Waste Managers next week should provide an update on the organics management. There needs to be more clarification including where it applies to Skagit County.

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If it becomes mandatory for residential, it directly affects the City of Mount Vernon as they operate their own Yard Waste Facility. There would be no incentive to have a yard waste facility if its going to be mandatory service for resident. The other option would be to limit the hours of operation. The yard waste is collected at the facility, transported to the Town of LaConner. This is also a subscription service for residents through Waste Management. The Town of LaConner has a compost operation. If it becomes a mandatory service, then operations need to be looked at for the drop-off facility.

The Town of LaConner services Friday Harbor. Regarding the Ordinance, Section 3, it provides that Skagit County will purchase finished compost from companies. We would like to see that revised to local entities. We need to make that they are permitted facilities. If they are permitted, then we know that they have the proper testing and qualities standards in place.

The local Health Department is in charge of the local jurisdictions in ensuring that all the necessary permits to have a fully composting facility is in place, not the U.S. Compost Council.

There are three permitted facilities in the County, Skagit Soils and Dykstr Farms(chicken) and LaConner.

The language will probably not say “permitted by Skagit County Health Department”, in order to leave it a little more general in case it is necessary to go out of County. It will probably read, “permitted by their local Health Jurisdiction. A cost worksheet will be prepared with a breakdown of sales and prices for all the local compost facilities. Dykstra Farms is permitted with a Commercial permit.

Callie will be the contact for Skagit County for Outreach, Compost uses and reporting.

Section 2

The Ordinance addresses the cost not exceeding 10%. Once the cost worksheet is completed, this number will be revised as necessary.

Since this is the first outline of the Ordinance, others may not have had the chance to review it yet. It needs to be determined what the Ordinance approval procedures is. Any comments need to be sent to Ms. Margo Gillaspay for editing.

Section 6

We need to report as a Jurisdiction, not for the entire County, but what we used in our projects. It needs to be determined where the tonnage number came from and what it’s going to include.

The Department of Ecology is working on drafting more guidance for how that reporting is going to work. This is the language straight from them.

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Will there be some sort of language that states where most of the tonnage is going to in order to be reassured that they are actually buying the compost from where the tonnage is going to, and not being imported from somewhere that the County tonnages are going to. That is one of the biggest concerns about this Bill. You have to be able to move it out, or have problems. It is a good point to make to the Department of Ecology before we put it down in writing and the Department of Ecology changes it on us.

c. 2023 Budget

The 2023 Budget was proposed. It has not yet been finalized yet by the Board of Commissioner's. There were no big changes added. A request was added for a technical intern for Callie Martin for next summer for Outreach. We are looking at possibly expanding our Operations Team at the Transfer Station. A replacement will be needed in the not too distant future for the Transfer Station Manager position. We are considering adding a Mechanic to assist with Operation. We are up about 5% in tonnage this year over last year, and expect the same moving forward for next year.

Announcements/New Business

The Free Tire Roundup was held on September 27, 2022, with 2,668 tires being collected at the Clear Lake Transfer site. A gated facility was necessary due to liability issues. There was not sufficient capacity to accept all customers tires, so the event had to be closed down early. The total tonnage came to 41.87 tons of tires. The event was financed through the Department of Ecology grant. Any interest in waste from Cities, that is difficult to dispose of on curb-side systems, could possibly go into some of Skagit County's collection events next year. The tire event was understaffed due to being such a labor-intensive collection event. The County contract with Liberty Tire was used. Liberty Tire is a full-service tire recycler and was able to turn the collected tires into various products such as asphalt and other items. Liberty arrived on site with 2 double-semi trailers on the event day and were fully loaded. Liberty returned on two additional days to collect the remaining tires. Tires were accepted by type, tractor tires were not accepted. The tire limit at the roundup was set at 20 per person. The limit was exceeded by many, and too difficult to monitor due to short staffing. Liberty Tire suggested that customers be advised to make multiple trips for those over the limit. Many customers were physically challenged and required assistance. There will possibly be another collection event held next year. A different site in the future roundups is being considered, with the event being held over the course of multiple days. There were some issues with customers wanting to continuously dump tires, at the Clear Lake site after the event, and there were threats to dump tires in the river. There was great interest in tire disposal.

The Litter Crew Supervisor sent in pictures this morning of 100 tires dumped illegally near the river.

The Department of Ecology will possibly have funding around the beginning of 2023 for tire collection events specifically.

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Public Comments

Ms. Gillaspy, opened the floor to address any public comments.

There were no public comments.

Unfinished Business

Ms. Gillaspy, opened the floor to address any unfinished business.

There was no Unfinished Business.

Adjourn

Ms. Gillaspy, thanked everyone and called the meeting to an end.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:15 p.m.