



SCA Public Issues Committee

MINUTES

May 14, 2025 – 7:00 PM

Online Meeting

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Covington Councilmember, Joseph Cimaomo, Jr., Public Issues Committee (PIC) Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:11PM. 20 cities were represented. ([Attachment A](#)).

Guests present included: Tracy Taylor, Auburn (PIC Alternate); Amy Lam, Sammamish (PIC Alternate); Penny Sweet, Kirkland; Jon Gire, Bellevue Staff; Katie Halse, Bellevue Staff; Chris Searcy, Enumclaw Staff; Amy Tsai, Redmond Staff; Michelle Plorde, King County Staff; Misha Lujan, King County Staff; Tania Mondaca, King County Staff; Amy Ockerlander, King County Solid Waste Division (SWD); Christopher Stubbs, King County SWD; Lindy Honaker, King County SWD; Rebecca Singer, King County SWD; and Helen Chatalas, Association of Washington Cities (AWC).

Vice Chair Cimaomo noted that any discussion in the chat for those joining online would be maintained for public records purposes and included in the PIC minutes ([Attachment B](#)).

Mayor Nancy Backus, Auburn, moved, seconded by Deputy Mayor Harry Steinmetz, Des Moines, to continue the meeting's informational items without quorum. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Public Comment

Covington Councilmember, Joseph Cimaomo, Jr., SCA PIC Vice Chair asked if there was anyone in attendance who would like to provide public comment and encouraged any individuals with comment to contact sca@soundcities.org .

Hearing none, Vice Chair Cimaomo closed this portion of the meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes – April 9, 2025 Meeting

This item was moved to later in the agenda because there was not a quorum at the beginning of the meeting. Item was addressed once quorum was reached, following Item 7. Covington Councilmember, Joseph Cimaomo, Jr., SCA PIC Vice Chair asked for any questions or amendments to the minutes of the April 9, 2025 SCA PIC meeting.

Mayor Nancy Backus, Auburn, moved, seconded by Deputy Mayor Jim Ribail, Carnation, to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2025 SCA PIC Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Chair's Report

Covington Councilmember, Joseph Cimaomo, Jr., SCA PIC Vice Chair did not have any updates on behalf of Shoreline Mayor Chris Roberts, SCA PIC Chair, or updates as Vice Chair for tonight's meeting.

5. Executive Director's Report

SCA Executive Director Robert Feldstein thanked the committee members for attending tonight's meeting.

Feldstein provided an update on the evolution of the Utilities Affordability Summit introduced at the April PIC meeting by the City of Kirkland. Executive Braddock recently announced a 200-day plan which included this summit with partner cities around utility affordability, rapidly speeding up the planning timeline and thus increasing the required staff capacity. SCA will partner with the County on this issue. Feldstein has discussed the summit at the City Managers/City Administrators meeting, and with King County staff John Taylor and Misha Lujan. Following this PIC meeting, Feldstein will meet with the Executive to discuss PIC and other topics.

The next step for PIC is to discuss ways to connect PIC more closely to policy work in committees earlier and upstream to give the caucuses a stronger voice from PIC. An additional goal is to increase PIC attendance.

6. Regional Board and Committee Appointments

Covington Councilmember, Joseph Cimaomo, Jr., SCA PIC Vice Chair recommended this item be moved to the next PIC meeting due to lack of quorum. Councilmember Melissa Stuart, Redmond, made a point of order to suggest that this item be discussed at this meeting and bring feedback to the decision next month. Leah Willoughby, SCA Chief Operating Officer, suggested the item could be moved to later in the agenda in the hopes of reaching quorum.

This item was moved due to lack of quorum, and was addressed once quorum was reached following Item 7.

SCA Executive Director Robert Feldstein introduced Item 6 and spoke to the PIC Nominating Committee's actions. The PIC Nominating Committee met to review candidates for the Regional Transit Committee (RTC). As detailed in the packet, the Committee recommended elevating Councilmember Neal Black, Kirkland, from an alternate to voting member of RTC and appointing Councilmember Tracy Taylor-Turner, Auburn, as a new alternate.

Councilmember Melissa Stuart, Redmond, expressed appreciation for work of committee. Stuart shared concern that this would create an imbalance in RTC membership, as this would result in two fewer voting members from the North Caucus as from the South, and asked if there were other qualified candidates from the North and what factors were considered. Feldstein responded that there was one candidate from the North, several from the South, and one from Snoqualmie Valley. Feldstein also stated that a composition difference of 2 is in keeping with about 40% of committees with similar differences, as on 7 committees the North has a majority by 2 seats and on 5 committees the South has a majority by 2 seats, meaning this is within the margin of regional balance. He explained that there is variation in membership across types and sizes of committees due to who applies. Geography, history, size of city, form of government, and experience are the five factors considered.

Councilmember Dave Hamilton, Bellevue, raised that geographic distribution of candidates is important for consideration and expressed concern about precedence this sets and feels it seems contrary to the appointment policy.

Deputy Mayor Jim Ribail, Carnation, mentioned Snoqualmie Valley is not even in PSRC's transportation plan and has no representation in regional plan. Ribail stated finding elected officials to serve on committees is difficult given they hold full-time jobs.

Mayor Nancy Backus, Auburn, expressed that over the course of her time at SCA the balances have changed even while striving for equity. Backus shared that even during cases of imbalances, the caucuses work well together given the goal is to focus on SCA as a whole rather than on specific cities. Backus stated that she does not believe this sets precedence as this has been an ongoing practice, though she understands this would be a concern if it occurred in the majority of committees.

Vice Chair Cimaomo welcomed Black as a voting member of RTC pending the vote outcome.

Mayor Nancy Backus, Auburn, moved, seconded by Deputy Mayor Sue-Ann Hohimer, Normandy Park, to approve the recommendations forwarded to SCA Board for final approval at the next full board meeting. The motion passed.

7. Regional Board and Committee Updates

Covington Councilmember, Joseph Cimaomo, Jr., SCA PIC Vice Chair asked if there were any questions regarding the Boards and Committees memorandum included in the packet.

Deputy Mayor Harry Steinmetz, Des Moines, asked about what came of the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) review of the state legislative session with regard to housing issues. Aj Foltz, SCA Policy Analyst, clarified that committees in general receive a briefing of what happens at the state legislature, to which the committee reacts and responds. Members of the AHC SCA Caucus specifically asked for a deeper dive on the affordable housing agenda and received an update on that from AHC staff.

Councilmember Dave Hamilton, Bellevue, asked for clarification that PIC is on Item 7, and thanked the staff for these updates as a helpful tool. Hamilton asked about updates on the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency (MIDD) Sales Tax Renewal item, and if PIC will be able to see this issue in the future. Laura Belmont, SCA Policy Analyst, explained that staff have reached out to MIDD staff to see if they are available to present at the next PIC meeting, or another time soon in a different format. Belmont encouraged cities with human services or other subject matter experts interested in providing feedback on the renewal to reach out to SCA so a group can be convened.

Hamilton also asked if SCA will be sharing outcomes of the state legislative session or weighing in on federal budget reductions that have significant impacts on cities. SCA Executive Director Robert Feldstein said that SCA is following the lead of the Association of Washington Cities (AWC), since AWC is more resourced at the state level. Feldstein shared that SCA staff are having

informal conversations on how entities are responding to federal action, such as with city managers and deputy mayors, but have not done a federal overview.

At this time, quorum was achieved, so Items 3 and 7 were subsequently addressed before moving forward with the rest of the agenda.

8. Emergency Medical Services Levy Renewal

Presentation by King County Emergency Medical Services Director Michelle Plorde. Materials attached and available [here](#) .

Plorde gave an overview of the Medic One/EMS levy renewal process. An 8-month process was held to develop recommendations for the Strategic Plan and finance plan for King County voters to consider renewal in 2025. 75% (9 out of 11) of the cities in King County with a population over 50,000 must approve it for the ballot, as must the King County Council. The King County Executive transmitted it to the King County Council in April.

Any time 911 is called, the Medic One/EMS system is used. It serves 2.3 million people throughout the County and provides services every two minutes. It has responded to over 255,000 calls in the County in 2024, with a survival rate for cardiac arrest of 51%. The regional system is centered on partnerships and uses a tiered response model that is equity-driven and committed to providing high-quality care. The system also tries to innovate new strategies in pilot programs before bringing them to the rest of the county.

The taskforce needed to identify programmatic needs, develop a financial plan, provide sufficient reserves, and recommend a levy length, rate, and ballot timing. All money raised in the City of Seattle is retained within Seattle.

The 2020-2025 Medic One/EMS levy had a starting rate of 26.5 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value to generate \$1.115 billion over a six-year period. The levy funds Advanced Life Support (ALS), Basic Life Support (BLS), regional services, strategic initiatives, and reserves.

The EMS Advisory Taskforce had 20 seats, which were held by cities with 50,000+ in population, the Sound Cities Association, Fire Commissioners, the King County Council, and the King County Executive's Office. Four subcommittees were also designed to report back to the full taskforce, which developed key recommendations.

For the ALS subcommittee, the recommendations were to continue using the ALS allocation methodology, include a place holder for potential new services, and continue using reserves and contingencies to cover unanticipated costs. For the BLS Subcommittee, the recommendations were to increase total BLS funding as they are asked to do more, inflate funding annually by a CPI-W+1, distribute funding 60% call volume to 40% assess value to promote equity and access, and support Fire Chiefs' mental wellness and equity and inclusion efforts. The Regional services committee recommended continuing the delivery of programs, enhancing programs such as initial EMT trainings for new staff, and maintaining and developing strategic initiatives. These

initiatives are ECHO (which aims to enhance education about EMS in the community), PRIME (data systems), and a new emergency medical dispatch system.

Plorde overviewed expected costs over the life of the levy. The finance subcommittee recommended a risk analysis to determine appropriate reserves, which are driven by revenues such as beginning assessed valuation and expenditures such as the number of ALS units and cost per unit. Each risk scenario has a range, for a total range of \$31.8-76.9 million. Total revenues were originally estimated at \$1,552,700,000 while expenditures and reserves are estimated at \$1,505,700,000, for a total reserve of \$47 million. Currently, total revenues are estimated at \$1,526,300,000 while expenditures and reserves are estimated at \$1,505,900,000 million, for a total reserve of \$20.4 million. The levy is set to appear on the November 2025 ballot.

Deputy Mayor Jim Ribail, Carnation, expressed that, while we are dealing with levy fatigue, as a former firefighter and EMT, this is probably the best and most well-thought-out levy. Ribail stated having ALS is vital in dire situations and shared appreciation for the presentation.

Deputy Mayor Harry Steinmetz, Des Moines, echoed Ribail's comments, saying this was a well-laid-out levy with an important cause that deserves support despite levy fatigue.

9. Solid Waste Division Rate Changes

Presentation by King County Solid Waste Division (SWD) staff. Materials attached and available [here](#) .

Christopher Stubbs, King County Solid Waste Division (SWD) Deputy Director, began the presentation by sharing that the rate is preliminary and has not been adopted by the King County Council. SWD operates eight transfer stations, 2 rural drop boxes, nine closed landfills, one currently operating landfill, and a zero waste Re+ program.

The revenue to fund this program is primarily generated by the solid waste disposal rate, which is a per-ton charge often referred to as a tipping fee. In the beginning of 2024, SWD introduced the fixed annual charge (FAC), which is independent of the variable tonnage delivered to the system and is instead a fixed charge for each waste hauler based on the proportion of total tonnage each hauler brings into the system. The FAC was instituted to ensure adequate funding for the division in future years as waste diversion and reduction strategies are implemented to reduce overall tonnage in system. The projected revenue for the division in 2025 is expected to total \$175M, primarily derived from disposal fees, which come from self-hauling customers and commercial customers who haul garbage on behalf of residents and businesses. From the commercial stream, about \$102M is from tipping fees, while the FAC is only \$23M. Revenue is mainly used to support direct services, such as costs to operate transfer stations, transport waste to the landfill, and manage it once it is in the landfill. Revenue is also used to ensure regulatory compliance, strategic planning, household hazardous waste program, and various programs that move county toward future of zero waste of resources (Re+ program). The Re+ program and diversion strategies will yield significant environmental and financial benefits to ratepayers.

The proposed rate increase for 2026 is being driven in part by a projected increase in capital expenditures in the near-term and the resultant debt service the county will accumulate in the outyears. Capital investments are largely driven by projects to modernize and rightsize infrastructure, amplify services offered to ratepayers, and ensure regulatory compliance. These include the South Country Recycling and Transfer Station, the Northeast Recycling and Transfer Station, and the acquisition of a natural gas plant. Capital projects are underway to expand the capacity of Cedar Hills Regional Landfill.

The 2026 rate proposal would increase the average curbside rate by \$0.71 per month, though this varies by jurisdiction and can size. The 32-gallon can size is the most popular in the region and has been used to illustrate rate increases from King County and haulers. Lindy Honaker, King County SWD Special Projects Manager, shared rates can disproportionately impact low-income customers, and therefore SWD has programs for them. Cleanup LIFT allows customers to show an ORCA LIFT, Medicaid, or EBT card to receive a 50% discount at transfer stations. They are also launching a low-income discount program for customers in the UTC, allowing residents in unincorporated King County to access a low-income discount for the first time. Many cities also offer curbside low-income discounts.

The tipping fee is proposed to increase 8.0%, and the FAC is proposed to increase 15%. These are applied to the disposal component of rates. Commercial customers pay more into the system than the cost required to provide them with service, while the inverse is true for self-haul customers, so adjustments are proposed to bring the cost and revenues more into alignment.

Laura Belmont, SCA Policy Analyst, announced that the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) SCA caucus members, Deputy Mayor Laura Mork, Shoreline and Deputy Mayor Amy Lam, Sammamish, as well as the Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee Chair Councilmember Penny Sweet, Kirkland, are present to answer any questions PIC members have.

Councilmember Dave Hamilton, Bellevue, expressed appreciation for the flexible approach to rates being considered for 2026, and noted interest in seeing alternatives under consideration to reduce impacts on ratepayers. Hamilton asked about the County's long-term plans to rebuild rainy day and rate stabilization funds. Honaker responded that SWD is proposing single-year increase in part to reevaluate capital activity ahead of the 2027 proposal, and that the long-term plan for the rate stabilization reserve needs to be factored into that as well. Honaker shared a recession reserve will be carried forward.

Deputy Mayor Jim Ribail, Carnation, stated that Carnation was one of 3 cities to vote against the new solid waste contracts in 2017 when he began his time on Carnation City Council. Ribail expressed that King County has been using landfilling without a proper solution, and that a solution such as waste-to-energy would have a revenue source, recyclable materials, and would not result in items being buried. He summarized a recent article showing an Apple AirTag placed on a recyclable item ending up in a landfill, underscoring the need to change approaches to handling solid waste.

Councilmember Penny Sweet, Kirkland, stated that it is clear SWD has been working for a long time on a long-term solution and waste-to-energy is a consideration. She also introduced the new SWD Director, Rebecca Singer. Sweet shared that, at this time, the Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee (MSWAC) is not submitting a letter of support for this budget allocation to give SWD and MSWAC 2026 to figure out the direction of solid waste. Sweet stated that this will become part of the discussion around a utility affordability evaluation and summit, which has been embraced by King County Executive Shannon Braddock. She expressed that MSWAC is searching for best options for affordability for rate payers with best long-term impacts for the environment. Sweet stated that she anticipates a transition away from landfilling, but that we have the landfill until at least 2039, and it costs less to maximize the use of the landfill until it closes, though a long-term decision is needed soon. Sweet stated that there is excitement for extended producer responsibility, but it and the [Re+ program](#) have many hidden costs that have not been incorporated into long-term thinking. She reiterated that there are many questions to be asked around long-term budgeting, but that for 2026, a rate response letter is ready to be sent.

Deputy Mayor Jim Ribail, Carnation, said he appreciated Sweet's comments. Ribail stated that there are many environmental efforts underway and better solutions beyond landfilling exist that have proven to be better in other nations yet have not been taken up by King County. He urged King County to consider making these changes sooner.

Shoreline Deputy Mayor Laura Mork, SCA SWAC Representative, shared that nominal recycling and compost rates leave many items going to the landfill, necessitating changes. Mork shared that a rate response letter from the Solid Waste Advisory Committee is written but does not fully reflect the perspective of cities; she shared that the Metropolitan Solid Waste Advisory Committee may be more in line with city perspectives.

Sammamish Deputy Mayor Amy Lam, SCA SWAC Representative, encouraged members to review the spreadsheet of city costs for 2026 and work with their public works staff to get a longer-term near-future forecast since each city has different haulers and contracts. Lam stated the affordability summit is coming at an apt time, as she has heard that cities are looking at increases of 30-40% during the renegotiation of their hauler contracts. Lam also stressed that sewer rates are supposed to double in 6 years, which is untenable. She explained that under the upcoming extended producer responsibility programs, producers will pay into a fund that gets paid to municipalities, which could alleviate some of the recycling costs for cities. Lam also noted, however, that this, combined with cities renegotiating contracts, leaves the future of rates feeling uncertain.

10. Levies and Ballot Measures

Covington Councilmember, Joseph Cimaomo, Jr., SCA PIC Vice Chair requested that members share with SCA staff information regarding city ballot measures and levies, or to share relevant information now. SCA Executive Director Robert Feldstein shared this also makes us more useful to others who are planning and trying to discern what cities are doing.

11. For the Good of the Order

There were no items for the good of the order.

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Public Issues Committee Meeting – Attachment A
May 14, 2025

City	Representative	Alternate
Algona	Troy Linnell	David White
Auburn	Nancy Backus	Tracy Taylor
Beaux Arts Village	Aletha Howes	
Bellevue	Jared Nieuwenhuis	Dave Hamilton
Black Diamond	Tamie Deady	
Bothell	Carston Curd	Rami Al-Kabra
Burien	Kevin Schilling	
Carnation	Jim Ribail	
Clyde Hill	Steve Friedman	
Covington	Joseph Cimaomo, Jr.	Kristina Soltys
Des Moines	Harry Steinmetz	Yoshiko Grace Matsui
Duvall	Ronn Mercer	Mike Supple
Enumclaw	Chance LaFleur	Corrie Koopman-Frazier
Federal Way	Susan Honda	Lydia Assefa-Dawson
Hunts Point	Joseph Sabey	
Issaquah	Tola Marts	Kelly Jiang
Kenmore	Nigel Herbig	Melanie O'Cain
Kent	Bill Boyce	Toni Troutner
Kirkland	Kelli Curtis	John Tymczyszyn
Lake Forest Park	Tom French	Tracy Furutani
Maple Valley	Syd Dawson	Dana Parnello
Medina	Michael Luis	
Mercer Island	Dave Rosenbaum	Ted Weinberg
Milton	Tim Ceder	Shanna Styron Sherrell
Newcastle	Paul Charbonneau	Ariana Sherlock
Normandy Park	Sue Ann Hohimer	Jack Lamanna
North Bend	Errol Tremolada	Mark Joselyn
Pacific	Kerry Garberding	Vic Kave
Redmond	Melissa Stuart	Osman Salahuddin
Renton	Ruth Pérez	Armondo Pavone
Sammamish	Sid Gupta	Amy Lam
SeaTac	Jake Simpson	Iris Guzmán
Shoreline	Chris Roberts	Laura Mork
Skykomish	Henry Sladek	
Snoqualmie	Cara Christensen	Louis Washington
Tukwila	Jovita McConnell	Hannah Hedrick
Woodinville	David Edwards	James Randolph
Yarrow Point	Katy Kinney Harris	

Cities present at the meeting are **bolded**. Voting representatives present are highlighted.

SCA PIC May 14, 2025

Attachment B: Chat Log

(no content to record)