

Seattle Public Utilities Solid Waste Advisory Committee Charter

Version 3 Adopted May 2025

1. Introduction

Seattle Public Utilities' Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) have agreed to the following Charter to guide the SWAC's activities, interactions, and work products. This Charter establishes the SWAC's purpose and clarifies authority, roles, responsibilities, operating procedures, and rules. The original Charter was signed by Ray Hoffman SPU GM in July 2016. The second revision to the Charter was signed by SPU GM Mami Hara in April 2021. This is the third version of the SWAC Charter to be signed by SPU GM Andrew Lee.

2. Purpose

Seattle is required by the Revised Code of Washington ([RCW 70A.205.110](#)) to maintain an on-going advisory committee to help prepare the solid waste management plan, to assist in the development of programs and policies concerning solid waste handling and disposal, and to review and comment upon proposed rules, policies, or ordinances prior to their adoption. The SWAC is generally responsible for providing targeted review, feedback, and recommendations with respect to SPU's Solid Waste Line of Business's (SWLOB's) services, projects, policies, programs, and communications. Comments, questions, and observations from SWAC Members will help to guide SPU's solid waste work, including considerations of race and social justice, community needs, environmental responsibility, and equity.

3. Membership Selection Authority

The SPU CEO/GM selects members for SWAC, following recommendations from the SWLOB SWAC Coordinator, Branch Equity Team (BET) representative, and SWLOB Leadership.

4. Meeting Format

SPU's SWLOB administers the SWAC. SPU schedules the meetings, provides meeting space and an online platform, coordination, staff support, and light refreshments when meeting in person, as well as parking passes for Committee business.

SWAC meets in person a minimum of once every other month, on the first Wednesday of the month for up to 2 hours from 5:30-7:30 pm. If a holiday falls on the 1st Wednesday of the month the SWAC meeting will take place the following Wednesday. Ad hoc meetings, if needed, will be held online in between in-person meetings. Members of the public may attend by invitation or advance approval of the SWAC Coordinator or SWLOB Director(s).

5. Scope of Work

- SWAC interactions, activities, and work products are to focus on services, projects, policies, programs, and communications specific or relevant to SPU's SWLOB.
- SWAC will work with the SWLOB and other SPU staff to create an Annual Work Plan/Topics List based on SPU and SWLOB priorities.
- SWAC prioritizes topics from projects, policies, programs, and communications that are specific and relevant to SPU's SWLOB to consider for addition to its Annual Work Plan.

- The SWAC Work Plan should include any such topics that are identified as a priority by a majority of SWAC members. Field trips, recruitment activities, and specific training may also be included.

6. Member Composition and Eligibility

SWAC may have up to 15 active members, with a minimum of 9 members as established in RCW. In recruiting and selecting SWAC Members, SPU will meet the RCW requirements as well as strive to represent the diversity of Seattle’s communities in age, ethnicity, race, gender, family composition, housing type, sector, and geographic location. Members should have relevant subject matter experience, sector affiliation, education, and/or interest. Members must live or work in the City of Seattle or SPU’s Solid Waste service customer service area and may not be a current employee of SPU or the City of Seattle. Former SPU or City employees may apply.

RCW 70A.205.110 requires that SWAC consists of a minimum of nine (9) members that represent a balance of interests including, but not limited to, citizens, public interest groups, business, the waste management industry, agriculture, and local elected public officials. Seattle complies with these requirements with the following exceptions:

- Seattle is a special case, having a city-level SWAC. The confirmed membership of locally elected public officials to the committee does not apply and would create an imbalance of power.
- Agriculture in an urban setting can be expanded to food systems work, community gardens, etc.

Based on Seattle’s breadth of services and programs, SWLOB has determined the following provides a balanced of interests:

- 1-2 Business Improvement Areas or Public Development Associations (BIAs/PDAs) serving community by interest, affiliation, or geography.
- 2-3 Community Based Organizations (CBO) or individuals representing historically marginalized communities.
- 3-5 Businesses including waste related businesses and solid waste contracted haulers.
- 3-5 Interest-based groups or individuals representing housing, education, local food systems, environment, etc.

7. Membership Process

- An open recruitment period of 2-4 weeks will occur each year in the Spring with a target date of memberships completed by August.
- Recruitment materials, including application and instructions, will be posted to SPU’s website and will follow a recruitment outreach plan updated each year.
- Applications will be specific to SWAC needs and questions may be added for targeted focus areas.
- At the end of the open recruitment period, an Application Review Committee will meet, evaluate the applicants based on a set of evaluation criteria, and propose a list of applicants to move on to interview. This committee will consist of:
 - The SWAC Coordinator
 - Environmental Justice & Service Equity (EJSE) and/or BET Representative
 - 1-2 SWAC Members, and
 - 1-2 SWLOB Staff
- The proposed list of applicants to be interviewed will be reviewed and approved by the SWLOB Deputy Director.
- Selected applicants will then be invited to an interview with a panel consisting of
 - The SWAC Coordinator
 - EJSE and/or BET Representative
 - 1-2 SWAC members
- Interviews will be no more than 30 minutes with 5 questions and reviewers will use an evaluation rubric.

- Recommendations for membership will be made by the interview panel to the SWLOB Deputy Director through the SWAC Coordinator.
- SWLOB Deputy Director will propose recommendations for membership to SPU CEO/GM for approval.
- Applicants selected for membership will be notified in writing by the SWAC Coordinator.
- Membership will be confirmed upon signed letter from SPU CEO/GM and upon signing the SWAC Member Agreement. The Member Agreement and Disclosure Form is your commitment to serving on the SWAC abiding by the SWAC Charter and disclosing any conflicts of interest while serving.

8. Membership Terms

- The SWAC Membership term is 2 years but will consider special circumstances for 1-year appointments.
- Members may be re-appointed for an additional term of 1 or 2 years without re-applying.
- SWAC members can serve up to 4 consecutive years, with exceptions being made at the discretion of the SWAC Coordinator and SWLOB Leadership. After serving 4 years, members must reapply and will be considered among the current pool and/or anticipated needs of the Committee.
- Members may make a request to the SWAC Coordinator for a leave of absence if they cannot serve continuously during their appointment.
- If a member must resign, the member will state their reason in writing with their resignation date to the SWAC Coordinator.

9. Member Roles and Responsibilities

SWAC Members will:

- Abide by the SWAC Member Agreement & Disclosure Form mentioned above in section [6 Membership Process](#).
- Act as reviewer and advisor for SPU on SWLOB services, projects, policies, programs, and communications.
- Provide formal comments on SPU's solid waste plans and policies to the mayor and/or City Council as appropriate, following Charter guidelines (see section No. 10).
- Act as a participant, reviewer, and advisor regarding SPU's strategic planning.
- Actively participate in SWAC discussions and official SWAC comments (see section No. 10).
- Keep Committee discussions and activities focused on services, projects, policies, programs, and communications specific or relevant to SPU's SWLOB.
- Participate in creating the Annual Work Plan of topics/issues to be addressed by the SWAC.
- Attend regular meetings (approximately 2 hours every other month).
- Read background material, respond to emails, review agenda and notes for each meeting, and prepare questions and comments in advance or response to the meeting as needed (approximately 0.5-2 hours per month).
- Share appropriate information about SPU's services, projects, policies, and programs with their communities.

10. SPU Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The SWAC is managed by SPU's SWAC Coordinator. SWLOB administrative staff helps with meeting materials, notes, membership, and website.

SPU provides access to SPU's SWLOB studies, documents, and staff as needed specifically to fulfill the SWAC's purpose. All Members' initial requests for information or presentations must be communicated through the SWAC Coordinator.

Questions are welcome and staff will provide follow-up information to the best of their ability, given staff time, resource allocations, and other considerations. SPU reserves the right to apply the exemptions, procedural requirements, and time limits stated in the Public Records Act (RCW 42.56) to Members' requests for information.

11. Comments and Decision Making

The SWAC may advise and comment on SPU's SWLOB services, projects, policies, and programs to the Mayor, City Council, State Department of Ecology, and other parties.

The SWAC's comments may reflect the opinions of the Committee members, independent of SPU. However, the SWAC must give SPU at least 5 working days' notice by advising the SWAC Coordinator of the communication's subject matter before communicating to the Mayor, City Council, City Departments, any public agencies, or the media. This applies to any communication conducted as a committee member with any of these entities. Members reaching out to elected individuals independently of SWAC cannot claim to represent the SWAC in their communications unless this has been formally approved by the SWAC. Exceptions to this timeframe may be granted at the discretion of staff to accommodate legislative or rule-making schedules.

11.1 Procedure for Making Official Committee Comments

When SWAC is deciding whether and how to advise and comment on any topic to the Mayor, City Council, City Departments, or public agencies, the following procedure should be followed:

- The subject in question should be an Agenda item for at least one regular meeting.
- At least fifteen minutes of discussion time should be allotted on the agenda.
 - Discussion can be had with any number of Members present.
 - Not all of the fifteen minutes must be used.
- The SWAC Chair may amend the agenda to extend the discussion at the present meeting and/or a future meeting. A decision to make a comment may only be reached in a meeting where a majority of members are present in person or by phone.
- A decision about the content of SWAC's comments will be determined by consensus; if this is not possible, it will be determined by a majority vote in a meeting where at least half of the members are present. Dissenting opinions may be included in the letter.
 - If 51% of Members are not present, a vote on whether and how to comment can be held via conference or video call, and/or electronically, over e-mail or other electronic communication to which all Members have access.
 - If the vote for approval of comments/letter is held over e-mail or other electronic communication, the same rules apply as if voting in person. Electronic votes must clearly indicate the Member's position as "yes", "no", or "abstain".
- The Committee Chair or Committee officers must provide the proposed comments/letter to the SWAC Coordinator at least 5 working days before communicating it to the Mayor, City Council, City Departments, and/or any public agencies.
- The SWAC Coordinator and SPU staff may assist the Committee with research or information needed in connection with the committee's comment.
- Official SWAC comments must be written and sent by Committee Officers and/or Members, not SPU staff.
- The SWAC Coordinator and SPU staff may review Committee comments and suggest edits.

12. Officers

- SWAC will elect its own officers by a majority vote of the Members.
- Officer positions include:
 - Chair
 - Vice-Chair or Co-Chair
 - Secretary
- Each Officer's term is 1 year. Officers may be elected to additional consecutive terms. SWAC Members may choose to vote to extend an officer's term so that it ends when their Membership term ends.

12.1 Officers' Roles and Responsibilities

The SWAC Chair and/or Co-Chairs are/are responsible for the following:

- Facilitating meetings including adoption of notes.
- Encouraging active Member participation.
- Guiding the Committee in following the procedures described in this Charter.
- Guiding the creation and delivery of official Committee comments.
- Working with the SWAC Coordinator to plan and guide the Committee's Annual Work Plan/Topics list and field trips.
- Working with the SWAC Coordinator and SWLOB staff as appropriate, to plan meeting agendas, Member preparation for meetings and format, and field trips.
- Reviewing meeting notes and feedback from members and working with staff to follow up as needed.
- Working with the SWAC Coordinator to resolve Committee issues.
- Notifying the SWAC Coordinator in advance of submitting Committee comments to the Mayor, City Council, City Departments, and/or any public agencies.

The Vice Chair is responsible for the following:

- Assuming the Chair's responsibilities in absence of the Chair.
- Supporting the Chair in the Chair's above-listed tasks.

The Secretary is responsible for the following:

- Supporting the Chair(s) in the above listed tasks.
- Coordinating SWAC Office comment and letter writing activities including:
- Communicating letter timelines to the committee.
- Drafting initial letters based on group direction.
- Ensuring all Members can review and provide input during meeting discussions and on-line as needed.
- Following SPU communications protocols (see section No. 10).

12.2 Officer Election Procedures and Nominations

Nominations

- Nominations may be made by any Member; a member may be self-nominated.
- Nominations should be communicated in writing to the SWAC Coordinator with an interest statement.
- The Member's name will be added to a slate of candidates for SWAC Member's consideration.

Voting

- The slate of nominees for each position will be presented verbally and in writing to the Committee.
- The Committee will vote with paper ballots at the Committee meeting or via online survey.
- A majority of Members must vote by/on the designated election date for the election to be valid.
- Ballots will be counted by the SWAC Coordinator. Candidates will be elected by a majority of votes. If tied, a runoff of candidates will be administered.

Removal of Officers

- If an Officer is absent for 2 consecutive regular meetings, without notice, they may be removed from the officer position at the discretion of the SWAC Coordinator. Special circumstances (i.e., illness, family concerns, extended travel) may be considered as exceptions to this rule.
- Any Officer may also be removed from office by the Committee Members. During any meeting at which a majority of members are present, a Committee Member may introduce a motion to remove an officer. If it is seconded by another Member, the Committee must vote on the motion. If the majority of the Members present vote to remove the officer, the officer is removed from office effective immediately, and an election is held within one month to elect a new officer.

13. Member Dismissal

13.1 Failure to Participate

If a member is absent for three (3) regular Committee meetings without prior notice, they may be requested to submit their resignation or be dismissed at the discretion of the SWLOB Director after recommendation from SWAC Coordinator. Special circumstances (i.e., illness, family concerns, extended travel) may be considered as exceptions to this rule.

13.2 Failure to Abide by SWAC Member Agreement or Behavior Injurious to Committee Function

If a member fails to abide by the SWAC Member Agreement or engages in behavior deemed injurious to the Committee's function by the SWAC Coordinator and the Chair (or both Co-Chairs), the Member in question will receive the following:

- On the 1st Finding: Oral or written notice of the finding, and an invitation to discuss it with the SWAC Coordinator, and/or the Committee Chair.
- On the 2nd Finding: If the SWAC Coordinator, and the Committee Chair all find that one or both of the above conditions (i.e., failure to abide by SWAC Member Agreement or behavior injurious to Committee function) exist at any time after the initial notice is given to the Member in question, the Member will receive a written notice of the finding, and another invitation to discuss it with the SWAC Coordinator, and/or the Committee Chair, and/or SPU CEO/GM.
- On the 3rd Finding: If the SWAC Coordinator and the Committee Chair all find that one or both above conditions (i.e. failure to abide by SWAC Member Agreement or behavior injurious to committee function) exist at any time after the second notice is given to the Member in question, the Member may be dismissed. The SWAC Coordinator and the Committee Chair will make a recommendation for a proposed course of action to the SWLOB Deputy Director. After consultation with the Director, the final decision regarding a course of action will be made by the SPU CEO/GM.

If the Committee Chair or Co-Chair of a Committee is the Member subject to potential sanction as described above, then the SWAC Coordinator, and the Committee Vice-Chair or other Co-Chair of the same Committee will determine whether one of the above conditions exists and will proceed as described above. If the Vice-Chair or other Co-Chair is not available, the SWAC Coordinator will designate another member of the same Committee to act in their place.

14. Conflict of Interest

As part of an Advisory Committee, all Members are subject to the City of Seattle Code of Ethics set forth in [Chapter 4.16](#) of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) including, but not limited to, a requirement of a written disclosure at the time of application and no less than once per year..

15. Meeting Documentation

- SWAC meeting agendas will be posted to SPU’s public website. The SWLOB SWAC Administrative Support Staff will prepare written summaries of each SWAC meeting. These summaries will be sent to Committee Officers for review and editing suggestions. At a subsequent meeting, Committee Members will vote whether to approve each summary. Once approved, meeting summaries will be posted to SPU’s public website.
- Summaries of any additional official SWAC gatherings or activities may also be posted to SPU’s public website.
- While not required, presentation materials from SWAC meetings may also be posted to SPU’s public website with the presenter’s approval.

16. Charter Duration and Amendment

This Charter will remain in force from the date of signatures below. The SPU CEO/GM may amend or rescind this Charter at any time.

This Charter will be reviewed by the SPU GM/CEO and Solid Waste Deputy Director for a minimum of every 5 years. Changes made to the Charter must be disclosed to the SWAC Members within 3 working days after adoption.

Amendments may be proposed by SWAC Members and/or SPU Staff at any time. Proposed amendments will be considered by SPU CA/EJSE and the SWLOB and may be submitted to the SPU CEO/GM.

17. Adoption

We formally adopt this Solid Waste Advisory Committee Charter.

Andrew Lee, CEO/General Manager, **Date** _____
Seattle Public Utilities

Jeff Fowler, Deputy Director, **Date** _____
Solid Waste Line of Business

