Solid Waste Roadmap Update – July 2016

Summarized from an oral update given by Tom Chaimov at the 7/13/2016 Metro SWAAC meeting

Following is a progress update of Solid Waste Roadmap work. More information on Roadmap work can be found at oregonmetro.gov/solidwasteroadmap.

The Roadmap program encompasses six policy-related projects (#1-6 below), plus one technical support project (#7), together investigating ways to *get the most of what we don't want.*

1. Food Scraps
2. Metro South
3. Transfer System
4. Long-term management of discards
5. Landfill Capacity Policy
6. Fee & Tax Policy
7. Foundational Modeling

Food Scraps Capacity. The purpose of food scraps recovery is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfills and instead of burying food, use it as a feedstock to produce useful products, such as compost and energy. The key question of Metro's Food Scraps Capacity work is: What actions should Metro take to ensure adequate and reasonably proximate capacity to transfer and process food scraps collected from the region's businesses and residents?

The basic chicken-and-egg problem that has remained unsolved for over a decade is that a regional food recovery program would benefit both from more local processing capacity than we currently have and increased separation and collection of food scraps. Neither one works without the other. Earlier this year, Metro focused on processing when we issued a Request for Qualifications that ultimately qualified nine firms as eligible to propose on adding processing capacity for the region. If the Metro Council directs staff to issue a Request for Proposals to those nine firms, it will happen after we have a better understanding of how to get enough quality feedstock delivered to make a facility viable. Right now, a large body of work is focused on understanding the most effective way to get more participation from businesses that generate food scraps. Metro is reaching out to about 300 commercial food generators by phone, in person, and with online surveys to develop an understanding of why businesses that separate food choose to do so, why those who don't, don't, and why some businesses who used to separate no longer do. This information, along with additional analysis, will inform a discussion with SWAAC in September and the Metro Council later this fall. Metro is also investigating the costs and benefits of requiring certain types and sizes of food-generating businesses to have food recycling programs in place.

Metro South Station. As a response to the question, *What service alternatives should Metro pursue at Metro South Station and in the vicinity to provide the full suite of needed services?*, SWAAC members and other stakeholders helped fashion a number of plans for potentially reconfiguring Metro South Transfer Station—built over 30 years ago in Oregon City—to maximize its functionality in the modern system. Of the two plans still under review, one would keep self-haul services on site and the other would move self-haul to another site, location TBD. At this time, whether or not to invest in reconfiguring Metro

South Station depends on what is expected of that site for the future. For example, it is possible that moving ahead with reconfiguration may be triggered by the need for Metro South to step up and provide commercial food scraps reload service. But we will not know for sure until we know if and where new food scraps processing capacity is established. There may be other triggers. A recent constructability review indicated that moving self-haul offsite is likely the more feasible of the two remaining options.

Transfer System Configuration. Metro South Station operates within the larger regional transfer system. The key question for the transfer system is: What model of the public-private transfer system (e.g., tonnage allocations, service levels, rates) best provides for the public interest?

SWAAC saw last month that Metro Council intends to maintain largely status quo configuration for the remainder of the decade, with a few new policies for Council to consider on July 21, 2016 to shore up the system's delivery of public benefits. The specific policy proposals and an explanation of the process used to form them can be found on Metro's website. Two of the more significant new policies include Metro's willingness to allocate no more than 60% of wet waste to private firms (thus preserving at least 40% of wet waste to the public transfer stations), and a policy of progressive steps to improve transparency in transfer station charges region-wide. With any new policy, there can sometimes be unintended consequences, so, if adopted, staff anticipates that over the next three years—till 2020, implementation will be viewed as transitional, to monitor how these new policies play out and to make adjustments as needed.

Long-term Management. The current Regional Solid Waste Management Plan provides relatively detailed guidance on waste reduction programs, but is less specific about what to do with the garbage that remains after all reduction efforts. Therefore, the key question of the Long-term Management project is: What should the region do with materials that aren't reused, recycled or composted? For decades, landfill has been the default answer. To start, Metro took a look at over a dozen garbage management technologies (gasification, pyrolisis, anaerobic digestion of garbage, etc.), and culled everything as technically infeasible for our region except for Waste-to-Energy (WTE) and possibly Advanced Material Recovery (AMR).

On WTE, Metro Council directed staff engineers to work with Covanta staff, the operators of the Marion County WTE facility in Brooks, this summer and fall to better understand the specifics of a proposed expansion at that site. Associated with that fact finding, Metro intends to conduct a rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) comparing two specific scenarios: landfilling 200,000 tons per year somewhere in eastern Oregon or eastern Washington vs. sending that same waste to an expanded Covanta Marion facility. The HIA will take into account transportation and processing impacts and will look at tradeoffs from one part of the state to another. As part of this assessment, Metro will also conduct a life-cycle greenhouse gas analysis of the two scenarios. There will be public involvement in the HIA, but we do not yet know precisely what that will look like. We will keep SWAAC informed as our plans develop. Staff will roll out final HIA results probably in February-March 2017.

Related, the Metro Council will be hearing about the Durham/York (Ontario, Canada) WTE facility at its July 21, 2016 meeting. At that meeting, the Director of Waste Management Services from the Durham regional government will share her region's thinking that led to the establishment of North America's first greenfield waste-to-energy facility in 20 years. The purpose of this invited visit it to understand the

factors, considerations, and the mindset that led the Durham, and partner York, communities to pursue a WTE solution instead of continued landfilling or other alternatives.

On Advanced Material Recovery, generally, Metro believes that the technology works in concept. This is technology to pull recyclables or energy-recoverable materials from mixed waste. We think it will be prudent to await results from the State of Oregon's 2016-17 waste composition study to see if there is enough good stuff in the garbage to warrant running it through a sophisticated—and probably expensive—sorting process.

Fee and Tax Policy. A basic question of Metro fee and tax policy is: How should Metro recover the cost of solid waste services and programs, and general government, to improve stability, equity and predictability? In general, Metro believes that its fee and tax policies are appropriate; however, there may be specific opportunities to better align those policies with desired outcomes and public benefits, especially given recent and anticipated future changes in the region's solid waste system.

For example, Metro has a long-standing policy to exempt certain types of waste from Metro fees or taxes, to encourage certain behaviors, such as material recovery. Metro doesn't levy fees and taxes on recycled material. Similarly, some special wastes, such as environmental cleanup material, also are mostly exempted from fees and excise tax. Metro is taking an opportunity to re-examine current practices, to ensure consistency with desired outcomes. As a first step, Metro will refresh a 10-year-old study of Metro's fee and tax policies, specifically related to exemptions. That refreshed study should be completed before year end, in time for a new subcommittee of SWAAC to convene beginning in early 2017. The report will provide a basis for discussion and debate, as that new subcommittee develops options to improve Metro's fee and tax policies. The Fee and Tax process is expected to resemble the MRF/Conversion Tech process that is wrapping up now.

Landfill Capacity Policy. Earlier this year the Metro Council asked staff to develop a draft landfill policy to answer a key question: How should capacity of landfills inform where Metro directs waste for landfill disposal?

Acknowledging that our region has access to ample landfill space, the proposed policy would direct waste generated in the region to only those landfills that do not have to expand to accommodate more waste. On May 26, 2016 the Metro Council adopted a Resolution finding that staff had fulfilled its obligation to develop such a landfill capacity policy, *and* Council deferred any action relative to such a policy until December 1, 2016 or later.

Foundational Work. Metro is developing a model to inform all sorts of long-range planning, not just the Roadmap or a Roadmap project. This model is not about policy-making, but is a technical tool to provide information for various policy-making efforts. The basic question the model sets out to answer is: What is the amount and nature of waste that might be disposed in the future, and how will various alternatives perform in managing it?

The basic structure of the flow model[1] is complete, with current work focused on refinements and developing the user interface.

That summarizes brief updates on all seven elements included under the Solid Waste Roadmap Program banner. For more information, go to oregonmetro.gov/solidwasteroadmap or contact Tom Chaimov at tom.chaimov@oregonmetro.gov .

[1] At its most basic level, the foundational model—sometimes referred to as a "flow model"—generates waste on the ground based on generator type (residential vs. business, type/size of business, etc.); waste is loaded into into appropriate vehicles; and those vehicles travel over the road network to tip at appropriate regional facilities for reload and ultimate delivery to landfill. With knowledge of travel costs, tip fees and emissions, the model characterizes the cost and environmental impacts of different user-specified scenarios.