

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting
Date: Thursday, January 23, 2025
Time: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Place: Zoom meeting
Purpose: *The purpose of the Regional Waste Advisory Committee is to provide input on certain policies, programs, and projects that implement actions in the 2030 Regional Waste Plan, as well as to provide input on certain legislative and administrative actions that the Metro Council or Chief Operating Officer will consider related to the implementation of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan.*

Members in Attendance:

Chair Mary Nolan, Metro
Vice-Chair Christine Lewis, Metro
Marta McGuire, Metro
Audrey O'Brien, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Beth Vargas Duncan, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association (ORRA)
Bill Kent, City of Roses – Material Recovery Facility
Chieko Yoshihara, Communities of Color
Daisha Tate, Communities of Color
Mayor Denyse McGriff, Oregon City – Local Government
Donnie Oliviera, City of Portland – Local Government
Fiona Conneely, Environment & Health Advocate
Jackie Kirouac-Fram, Rebuilding Center – Reuse
Commissioner Pam Treece, Washington County – Local Government
Kristin Leichner, Pride Disposal – Transfer Station
Mayor Lacey Beaty, City of Beaverton – Local Government
Laura Tokarski, System User
Ryan Largura, City of Troutdale – Local Government
Teresa Gaddy, Communities of Color

1. CALL TO ORDER & MEETING OVERVIEW**2. Regional Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan**

Marta McGuire introduced Estee Segal and Luis Sandoval from Metro.

Key points of the presentation included:

Staff reviewed the development of the Regional Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan. The plan sets a 20-year vision and blueprint for investments to improve the reuse, recycling and garbage system in the region. The plan has gone through multiple phases of development, creating values and outcomes, identifying gaps in the system, stakeholder engagement, scenario development; culminating in the current draft plan. The plan is addressing gaps and values by proposing:

- Building community depots throughout the region that would accept reusable items, source separated recyclables, household hazardous waste and self-haul garbage.
- Support the reuse sector by creating reuse warehouse space, a reuse mall and long-term funding for reuse organizations.
- Expand the transfer and processing capacity for organics for both the public and private sectors.
- Consider reducing Metro's role in the process and transfer of waste from commercial haulers to best serve the public interest.

- Examine the wet waste tonnage allocation program and Metro's tonnage reserve.
- Evaluate Metro's regulation of private facilities.

Member Discussion:

Kristin Leichner, Pride Disposal, asked if all facilities in the region are required to accept commercial food waste upon permit renewal. Warren Johnson, Metro Policy and Compliance Director replied that is not correct, and that decision would be made by Metro Council.

Ms. Leichner also asked why yard debris is not considered a gap in the plan. Luis Sandoval replied that a full analysis was not done for that sector because many facilities that take that material are open to the public.

Chieko Yoshihara, Communities of Color, shared that she did not know that Metro had transfer station until she took the Master Recycling Program. She believes there is a gap in knowledge about opportunities. Was this addressed in the plan? Marta McGuire replied that within the department we provide educational services for youth and adults, but there is always an opportunity to increase awareness of services. Estee Segal added that creating the depots could serve as an opportunity for education as services are more widely available across the region.

Daisha Tate, Communities of Color, asked if consumers have any choice in who their provider is? Ms. McGuire replied that people are assigned to a service provider based on contracts between local governments and private haulers.

Ms. Tate also asked about the difference in rates between high and low income areas. Beth Vargas Duncan, ORRA, responded that garbage and recycling is like other utilities which you don't get to choose your provider; it requires significant infrastructure investment so serving particular areas helps keep it affordable. Companies have been working with local governments to address affordability and several either offer or are thinking about income assistance options.

Donnie Oliviera, City of Portland, shared that there is a distinction between services provided to single family and multi-family customers. This makes managing costs and rates difficult. The plan supports how we provide equitable services across the region.

Mr. Oliveria would like to encourage the committee to think about the circularity of the system and how we place facilities to improve the ability to reuse materials.

Fiona Conneely, Environment & Health Advocate, thinks that self-haul depots can improve access, but people in some areas do not have cars and will struggle to access these depots and asked how this is being addressed. Ms. McGuire replied that we realize there is no disposal option that works for all. Metro is focusing on providing funding to reuse organizations that assist customers with removal of materials from their homes, policies that will increase standards for curbside collection. Metro is working on this through varies angles, and this plan focuses on facilities. The depots will be designed to be pedestrian friendly.

Commissioner Treece, Washington County, asked who the engagement survey went to and what response rates were and if the data was split by geography. Estee Segal replied that it went out to all symposium attendees and was posted online. The response rate was 80 to

100 people. Metro staff will share the survey and engagement report with Commissioner Treece.

Ms. Yoshihara asked if the investments on page 64 of the plan were collection sites and processing sites. Ms. Segal replied that the depots listed would be collection sites, and materials would be transferred for processing to another location, which is why it is important to consider the location of all of these investments as Mr. Oliviera pointed out earlier.

Ms. Yoshihara also asked if the identified organics sites were collection or processing sites. Ms. Segal replied that these would be potential public private partnerships that would use existing facilities to collect and/or process organics.

Ms. Yoshihara also asked if the reuse investments would be spread across the region, or if there will be one large location. Mr. Sandoval replied that the plan is currently being written to create one location that would best serve the region, but as the plan develops different models with dispersed locations could be considered.

Ms. Yoshihara asked if the materials collected at depots would be shipped to the warehouse. Mr. Sandoval replied that this could be one option, or Metro could have contracts with reuse organizations that come and pick up those materials directly from the depots.

Mayor McGriff, City of Oregon City, supports the concepts of this plan, and wants to acknowledge that there may be challenges with accessibility for depots, but priority should be given to educating people about their impacts from consumption. The decentralization of facilities and having smaller depots throughout the region is ideal. She also supports removing commercial customers from Metro South Transfer Station.

Ms. Tate asked what the difference between the reuse buildings and community rerun or goodwill? Ms. Sandoval replied that the warehouse would not be open to the public and would be used to clean or repair items before redistribution. It could also serve as seasonal storage. The mall is meant to support organizations that have barriers to obtaining or keeping retail space and serve as a venue space.

Bill Kent, City of Roses, shared that the reuse business is incredibly challenging and supports the reuse impact fund. Asked if Metro has a list of materials that will be taken since some materials are more desirable than others. It is important to think about where materials go that Metro will not take. He encourages the system to be more inclusive when it comes to accepting materials and thinking about who and what facilities will be used for the best public good.

Ms. McGuire replied that this message comes full circle to the values of the plan, and that developments with the reuse area will be in collaboration with partners, and these details will come in the following phases of the plan.

Jackie Kirouac-Fram, Reuse, supported Mr. Kent's comments and that priority for reuse should be given to providing materials to those who need affordable options. She also shared that as she understands the reuse impact fund will support that goal. She wanted to encourage everyone to plan for less garbage and that if the intention of this work is to reduce garbage, we need to think about how to replace revenue to sustain services.

Ms. Kirouac-Fram shared that priorities often do not align, and she sees the reuse mall as a demonstration project to make people think about reuse but will not have a significant impact on diversion rates or make money. The mall is low on her priority list for the plan. Support through the reuse impact fund and warehouse will be far more impactful than a mall.

Ms. Leichner agrees with Ms. Kirouac-Fram's point. She also shared that she is very conscious of the costs since her company bears these costs and while \$1.50 may seem small in a vacuum but it will impact rates overall. She wanted to raise that she commented on the plan that depots could be established by working in partnership with the private sector that already has infrastructure in place. She wanted to clarify that this comment was meant to support building fewer new facilities to help mitigate costs, not that depots from partnerships would be in addition to the six proposed depots.

Laura Tokarski, system user, she shared she agrees with Ms. Kirouac-Fram's points, but also that the space for collaboration the reuse initiatives create can spark innovation.

Chair Nolan asked the committee to consider two questions about the plan and prepare to share answers at the February meeting. The questions were:

1. Do you have feedback on the sequence of the projects proposed in Phase 1?
2. Do you have feedback or additional comments for Metro Council as they deliberate on adoption of the plan.

Chair Nolan reminded the committee of the opportunity to tour the Metro transfer stations on February 6th and 18th.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments.

Final Remarks

MEETING ADJOURNED at 3:30 p.m.