

Metro Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2001

Members / *Alternates Councilor Susan McLain, Chair Councilor Bill Atherton, Alternate Chair Dean Kampfer, Waste Management (disposal sites) *Vince Gilbert, East County Recycling (disposal sites) Lee Barrett, City of Portland Tanya Schaefer (Multnomah County citizens) Mike Leichner Pride Disposal (Washington County haulers) Lynne Storz, Washington County David White, Oregon Refuse & Recycling Association (at-large haulers) Jeff Murray, Far West Fibers (recycling facilities) Frank Deaver (Washington County citizens) Mike Miller, Gresham Sanitary Service (Multnomah County haulers) Sarah Jo Chaplen, Washington County cities Dave Hamilton, Norris & Stevens (business ratepayers) Steve Schwab, Tri County Haulers	Non-voting Members Present Doug DeVries, Specialty Transportation Services Kathy Kiwala, Clark County, WA Terry Petersen, REM Chris Taylor, DEQ Metro and Guests Maria Roberts, REM Scott Klag, REM Steve Apotheker, REM Paul Ehinger, REM Greg Nokes, Oregonian
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Call to Order and Announcements

Chair McLain distributed a memo and survey to SWAC members and invited questions regarding an orientation for new SWAC members. There were no questions. Chair McLain asked SWAC members to complete the survey and return it to Connie Kinney at their earliest convenience.

Chair McLain asked members if there were any issues that they expected a response to that they did not receive in their packets. There was no response.

Mr. Murray announced a change on page 7 of the minutes from the April SWAC meeting and made a motion the minutes be approved with that correction. Mr. Petersen also asked for a clarification of the minutes on page 2, to state that not **all** of the compost in the state of Washington contained pesticide contaminants:

Mr. Hamilton seconded Mr. Murray's motion. The committee unanimously approved the minutes with the above-stated corrections.

REM Director's Update

Mr. Petersen acknowledged the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and more particularly Chris Taylor, for taking the leadership in an industrial waste exchange with King County, where different industries try to connect and exchange usable materials that might otherwise end up in the landfill. Mr. Petersen said that Metro will also be involved in this new program.

Metro sponsored its annual compost bin sale the weekend before last and sold 9,914 compost bins, which equals about 15,000 tons of diverted organic materials annually. Mr. Petersen

thanked Lynne Storz, Rick Winterhalter and Lee Barrett for their assistance, and that of their staff, in the bin sale.

Mr. Petersen announced that the City of Portland has recently enacted an ordinance specifying the use of Metro's recycled paint and all of the paint that it uses in their different projects. Mr. Petersen distributed two-for-one paint coupons to the committee.

On the 10th of May, Metro Council approved an assignment on Metro's Transport Contract from STS to CSU Transport. All of the contract terms, financial protections and prices carry over to the new contractor.

Mr. DeVries verified there would be no changes with the assignment to a new contractor.

Chair McLain introduced the comparison of revenue requirements and calculation of the Regional System Fee and asked for questions. Chair McLain invited members to bring their questions to the next meeting if they were not prepared to do so at this time.

Regional Solid Waste Management Plan Review

Mr. Klag said his presentation would include recapping the formal plan review process; what has or has not been working and how it might be changed; compare what is in the plan to the recent Waste Reduction Initiatives; and how we propose to change the plan to ensure we achieve the goals we have set for the year 2005.

Mr. Klag said that today he would like to narrow the focus of the discussion to the waste reduction aspect of the plan and compare the adopted plan with the initiatives and discuss some concepts for amending and positioning the plan for the future. The RSWMP (adopted in 1995) identified strategies designed to get the Metro region to a 56% recovery goal by the year 2005. Throughout the years, some of the RSWMP has been amended (i.e., hazardous waste management, illegal dumping, changes to the facility tonnage).

Mr. Klag said in terms of the waste reduction elements, the plan is currently structured with broad goals attached to descriptions of what the region was trying to achieve in the commercial and residential sectors. The plan sets forth recommended strategies to reach the goals (52% recovery by 2000 and 56% by 2005), as well as specific recommended practices and actions. Mr. Klag said the plan is sector-based – i.e., residential, commercial, commercial organics, construction and. The RSWMP is guided very strongly by the waste reduction hierarchy in terms of reduce; reuse; recycle; compost; recover for energy; and only then properly dispose.

Mr. Klag said the plan is very specific when describing actions over the first five years of the life of the plan and then describes activities in much more general terms. Mr. Klag said the more recent State of the Plan Report was for 1998-99 and showed that we are not on track to meet our recovery goals. By that point in time, recovery should have been at 48%, but was, in fact, 43.3%. The Waste Reduction Initiatives were designed to help boost recovery.

Mr. Klag said that with regard to commercial organics, the plan did not recommend that government step in and build organics processing facilities, but was fairly general and talked

about assisting market forces by conducting small pilots and research and development to support those efforts.

Mr. Klag said that in terms of amending the plan there are four areas: To affirm the commitment to the goals of the plan; to ensure that the waste reduction strategies are consistent with what is in the plan; to discuss new strategies; and to provide minor technical revisions to the plan format in terms of clarity and focus.

Mr. Klag explained that staff will also examine our programs in light of revised wasteshed goals enacted by the 2001 Oregon Legislature.

Mr. Klag said one concept discussed in the event the region was unable to reach the 56% recovery goal was that we might adopt strategies to require recycling for the commercial and C&D sectors. Required recycling might be requiring generators to recycle, mandatory processing or banning the disposal of particular types of materials for certain types of generators.

Mr. Taylor asked what the timeline for the implementation of these concepts was, and that he assumed that Council would be required to pass an ordinance for implementation.

Mr. Klag said Metro hopes to have the process completed by the end of the year and therefore would bring recommendations back to SWAC in late summer or early fall.

Chair McLain stated that Metro has had discussions with DEQ staff, who has stated they feel Metro is correctly reviewing the plan and assessing what additional steps are required in order to meet the goal. She stated that Metro is required to report the region's recycling rate to DEQ on a regular basis and DEQ has commented that an update of the RSWMP's strategies and concepts must take place. Chair McLain said she will request an Executive Summary that will set forth the details for the strategies and recommendations that will be distributed to SWAC and interested persons.

Mr. Vince Gilbert stated he had some reservations with "percentage" of recovery and believes tons should be tracked as well. Mr. Klag replied that tons were being tracked.

Mr. Barrett asked what the requirement was on the legislation being contemplated for the new wasteshed goals for 2005. Mr. Klag replied it would be the 56% recovery plus the 6% credit from DEQ. Mr. Barrett said that for the sake of SWAC members, the three elements comprising the 6% includes (2% of each of the three elements): backyard composting, reuse and waste prevention programs, with Metro and local governments. Mr. Barrett asked if there was any discussion of including other materials that would or would not count toward recovery, because the State of Oregon counts things differently than other states do and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has been trying to establish a national standard.

Mr. Taylor replied that DEQ is committed to examining "what counts," at least insofar as inerts.

Mr. White commented that the word "tweak" has been used when discussing the review of the RSWMP and it seems to him that if the region were "close" to its goal, this might work. He said

that currently City of Portland requires C&D recycling, and that in the city's survey, most generators were not aware of the requirement to recycle. Mr. White said that in view of the fact that it takes a lot of money to put these requirements into law, he believes you need to incorporate these undertakings into the rate system. He said there needs to be some very proactive thinking if you want to meet these kinds of goals, and it is not just a matter of tweaking. He said he doesn't want to appear negative, only realistic. He believes there is a lot of work that needs to be done in order to meet the goals.

Chair McLain said she didn't feel his comments are negative.

Mr. White said that someone has to step up to the plate to pay for services that are not now being provided but that are being requested, and it is not clear when you can charge for certain services. If it takes a change in state law, and if you want the generator to recycle, and you want the service to be provided, someone has to be able to charge for it, and right now we don't even know how much you can charge to put certain programs on the street.

Mr. Hamilton commented that if the question is "Who is going to pay for it?" it is clear that business is going to pay for it.

Mr. Gilbert said that although this comment is self-serving on his part, he believes all dry waste should be processed by materials recovery facilities before it gets landfilled. He said that if you separate it at the business level, you could make sure most of the dry waste would be recycled.

Mr. Hamilton commented that the costs could be quite expensive, and asked if we want to drive business out of the city.

Mr. Barrett said that 2005 is a long way away. He suggested that people at least think about whether being stuck with the 56% is such a great idea, because as things become more difficult to recycle, there will be a natural tendency to look for "heavy" items to go after and not necessarily those items that other factors should, in the scheme of things, factor in as more important to eliminate from the wastestream due to their toxicity or danger to the environment.

The Organics Waste Reduction Initiative

Ms. Jennifer Erickson provided an update to the SWAC on the Commercial Organic Waste Reduction Initiatives. As Scott Klag mentioned, the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan originally set out goals for organic waste recovery; however, the plan does have two shortcomings. First, there are lofty goals without associated powerful programs designed to reach those goals; and second, the plan recommends jumping right into food waste collection and processing, without first looking at upstream programs such as waste prevention and donation.

The Regional Organics Plan is one of three initiatives written by teams of regional partners and adopted in the fall and winter of 1999. The impetus behind these three initiatives was lagging recovery rates in three sectors (commercial, construction and demolition, and commercial organics) as reported by the State of the Regional Solid waste Management Plan Report. The goal of the plan is to recover an additional 52,000 tons of organic waste annually. The plan takes a two-track approach to organics recovery.

The first track focuses on:

- Understanding the food-generating businesses to tailor-make programs.
- Providing waste prevention education.
- Enhancing the existing food donation infrastructure to move surplus food to people not the landfill.
- Researching animal feed options.

Why promote food donation programs over collection and processing? Because 27% of food produced for humans every year is landfilled without even getting to people (48 million tons), at a cost of \$50 million annually. Oregon ranks highest in the nation for the prevalence of hunger – and Oregon landfills 385,516 tons of food per year. The region landfills over 190,000 tons of food annually, while Oregon Food Bank struggled to meet the needs of 500,000 hungry people by collecting 16,750 tons of food.

Metro has conducted research studies such as making 163 contacts to assess the best communication channels to use with food businesses and visiting 92 regional businesses to observe and track where waste is generated in different food businesses.

Metro has granted \$290,000 in two years to food rescue agencies (food banks and pantries). These funds have provided 41 refrigerators and freezers, trucks and outdoor canopies, and shelters for farmers' market-style distribution events, food resource development staff, and gasoline allowances for volunteer drivers. This effort amounts to approximately 5,000 tons of additional food recovered in the region that went to people, not landfills. This equates to \$620,000 of avoided disposal costs (figuring disposal and transportation). Second Harvest, a national food bank coalition, has a formula it uses to calculate the value of recovered food (\$1.67 per pound). Therefore, the 5,000 tons recovered with small, start-up programs in the region amounts to \$16,000,000 worth of food to food banks and an additional five million meals for the region's hungry.

A consultant is completing a research study on animal feed options as well. It is a less-expensive option than collection and processing of organics and there is an existing infrastructure for its collection. The problem is that Metro really had no idea how many farmers were out there or who currently collect food scraps. Although animal feed is an option, Metro is being cautious at this time due to diseases, such as BST (mad cow) and foot and mouth, that have devastated European livestock even though these diseases have not been detected or are not prevalent in the United States.

Ms. Erickson said that Metro has been involved with food donation for some time, and staff was on the original steering committee for the Oregon Food Bank's Harvest Share produce recovery program and have provided grants in its support. OFB Harvest Share program recovers produce from wholesalers that has never reached the market due to the fact that it does not have a ten-day shelf life (i.e., this food was originally garbage for produce wholesale warehouses). Now two million pounds of produce per year goes to the Food Bank.

Another example of an effective food recovery program is St. Vincent de Paul's FoodTrain, which currently recovers prepared food from hospitals, cafeterias and restaurants. Staff prepare about 4,000 frozen dinners per month for food box programs.

Track 2 programs focus on:

- Providing infrastructure development funds to help build processing options.
- Supporting pilot collection programs.

Infrastructure development primarily provides grants to help existing facilities beef up their ability to accept food waste or help new facilities come into town and take materials.

Ms. Erickson said that on July 1, 2001, \$500,000 will be available for infrastructure grants for recovery and processing of food. Metro has also dedicated \$600,000 and the use of Bay 2 at Metro Central Transfer Station to the City of Portland's RFP process for its food waste collection and processing program. Metro Central Station has been offered for a processor to come in and either use it as a reload facility or actually locate its processing on-site. Benefits of using Central are that the facility is already permitted as a solid waste use (though we will still need a still need a DEQ composting permit) and that a lot of the basic infrastructure, which can be extraordinarily expensive, is already in place.

Ms. Erickson said the City of Portland is concluding a pilot project to identify businesses that would benefit from a collection program, and additionally, ones that are too small or marginal to be involved in a food waste collection project.

Ms. Erickson said that the Metro region needs a facility that is capable of taking all food waste and soiled paper, because the region will not make progress unless all food waste can be recovered in some way, including meats and plate scrapings.

Ms. Erickson said that another facet of food waste recovery program are private sector initiatives, such as Mr. Gilbert's operation, Nature's Needs. Nature's Needs is a private processing facility in North Plains that accepts pre-consumer fruit and vegetable waste, currently recovering about 12,000 tons per year of vegetable waste, which has helped the region's food waste recovery numbers.

Ms. Erickson said that in addition, we have provided funds to DEQ for additional waste sorts for its 2000 waste composition study that will provide detailed information on food waste in the region. The waste comp study is sorting out food waste into 12 separate categories.

Ms. Erickson said that through this process Metro has learned that we need to base programs on the highest end-use, i.e., food as food, and not as garbage or feedstock for some operation. We have also learned that we need to build on the existing infrastructure, understand the businesses we are working with and what works for them, and look for ways to build creative unusual partnerships. It is very important to match our waste prevention and recovery programs with the way businesses conduct their day-to-day operations in order to be convenient and effective. The region needs to match the processing technology with the generator needs and the waste stream

we are looking at. And, finally, we need to facilitate some more understanding with some of the local government land-use officials.

Ms. Erickson said that the organic waste management plan is entering into its third year beginning July 1. Metro would like to evaluate the program as it exists, i.e., what type of impact it is having, whether our outreach is effective, how effective we have been in diverting more material to the food banks, and where we need to go in the future.

Ms. Erickson said the organics team will look at the potential for residential programs. An in-house, short-term research project will be conducted in order to ascertain what the rest of the country is doing in the residential collection system, how well it works and what it costs. Ms. Erickson said that in addition, larger facilities like the Nike campus and some of the hospitals would like to manage their food waste on-site and have questions on how this could be accomplished, which, if possible, could enhance the Metro region's recycling goal.

Ms. Erickson said that, in addition, there are storage and collection technology options that also need to be researched. She said these are things that we will be looking at during the course of the next three years in addition to continuing with our existing programs.

Mr. Taylor complimented Metro for its work in improving food donation and increasing food processing and composting.

Chair McLain complimented Ms. Erickson and the staff on the project and also made clear that Metro staff did not limit its research to studies, but they have actually conducted some on-the-ground projects.

Ms. Erickson also stated that she would be happy to mail or e-mail any additional information such as the three-year organics plan and a copy of the results to date to anyone who is interested. Please call her at 797-1647.

REM's Strategic Plan Status and Research Tasks

Ms. Matthews said she would like to convey some of the research tasks that will relate to barriers, constraints or options to consider as we develop our strategic plan and how that research will fit into the strategic plan.

Ms. Matthews said the two primary goals identified are to reduce the amount and toxicity of solid waste and to provide stewardship of disposal – i.e., to develop a disposal system that is efficient, economical and environmentally sound.

Ms. Matthews said the research tasks are focused mainly on fiscal management, provision of disposal services, and regulation.

With regard to disposal services, staff is reviewing bond obligations (for example, if there are restrictions on the use of transfer station property that would prohibit Metro from considering certain choices) and prepayment of bonds. Staff is also looking at a financial analysis of a possible sale of the transfer stations – the central question being whether the properties are worth the mortgage that Metro has on them. In addition, Metro has a mandate to the region to provide

for the safe disposal of household hazardous waste, and if we sell those properties, it would be more difficult to provide those services. And if ownership makes the most sense, what are the options that we would chart for the future; would it be business as usual?

Ms. Matthews said that REM currently has had discussions with a consultant reviewing a number of issues arising out of a central question, which is: If Metro's role as a market participant declines, would our role as a regulator need to increase? She said there are a variety of questions within that staff wish reviewed.

Ms. Matthews said in the final category, fiscal management, staff is reviewing the cost allocation of Metro's various fees and reviewing the Regional System Fee Credit and the management of REM's undesignated fund balance.

Ms. Matthews commented that by the next SWAC meeting, members should have a draft of the Strategic Plan.

Other Business and Adjourn

Councilor Atherton addressed the committee with regard to the rate review process. He said that the Regional System Fee is currently at \$12.90, and our costs are significantly above that. He said the Rate Review Committee will be addressing that issue shortly, and the SWAC will be informed as to when that meeting will take place.

The meeting was adjourned

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