

MEETING SUMMARY
METRO SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SWAC)

Metro Regional Center, Room 401
Thursday, February 17, 2011

Members / Alternates Present:

Matt Korot, Chair	Dave White	Michelle Poyourow
Rick Winterhalter	Bruce Walker	Amy Pepper
Scott Keller	Theresa Koppang	JoAnn Herrigel
Leslie Kochan (substituting for DEQ rep. Audrey O'Brien)		

Members / Alternates Absent:

John Lucini
Adam Winston
Susan Millhauser
JoAnn Herrigel
Paul Ehinger, Alternate

Guests and Metro staff:

Easton Cross, Allied Waste Segeni Mungai	Ray Phelps, Allied Waste John Schwer, City of Sherwood	Andy Sloop, Metro Chris Carey
Dan Blue, City of Gresham Joel Fischer, CFM	Dean Kampfer, WMO Dick Springer, WMSWCD	Gina Cubbon, Metro

I. Welcome and Review of Agenda*Matt Korot*

Matt Korot handed out a summary of the food waste recovery policy options, as redrafted following the SWAC meeting of February 2. Members took a few minutes to read them over before discussion began, which led to suggestions for clarified language in Option 1 (reflected below) and the addition of the words “such as” in Option 3 underlined below:

1. Metro should use regional funds to help pay personnel costs associated with new organics collection programs. These funds will leverage local government and ratepayer investments in personnel, equipment, and collection service. Preference should be given to funding options that would not raise the Regional System Fee, as long as those options do not jeopardize the integrity of other waste reduction programs.
3. Consistent with RSWMP priorities for organics, Metro should pursue options to provide organics transfer service at Metro South, such as by diverting dry waste loads or self-haul customers to other facilities.

II. Food Rescue Policy*Matt Korot, All*

Mr. Korot reviewed the discussion from the February 2nd meeting, recalling that there had been a suggestion to wait until the barriers and benefits study is completed in June. If the Committee chooses to make that decision, he explained that there will be a couple of options: 1) make no recommendation about policy options for food rescue at this time and wait until they review the study; or 2) simply recommend that Metro support the region’s food rescue system (as stated in the original policy paper).

Bruce Walker voiced support for the second option, and suggested adding verbiage that further recommendations would be made regarding food rescue after review of the study. Rick Winterhalter asked if that action might help as a placeholder in the following year’s budget. Mr. Korot responded that yes, it could; Leslie Kochan agreed. Ms. Poyourow said that just mentioning the study could be of benefit, as well. The majority of the group agreed.

Mr. White asked whether it is a good approach to fund this solely through the Regional System Fee (RSF). He remembered that Jennifer Erickson had mentioned a partnership concept at the previous meeting, which could go ahead while waiting for the barriers / benefit study.

Mr. Korot drafted language to use, and will refine it further.

III. Public Comment

Waste Management’s Dean Kampfer referred to number 1 on the draft recommendation sheet, stating that he disagreed with the idea of funds going solely to help pay local governments’ personnel costs associated with the program. Mr. Korot said he understood Mr. Kampfer’s position, but that was the decision of the Committee.

IV. Carbon Pricing Policy*Matt Korot, All*

Mr. Korot previewed the agenda item and handed out copies of a partial summary of recommendations from the materials management section of the Oregon’s Global Warming Commission’s (OGWC) *Roadmap to 2020*. (View the entire document at www.keeporegoncool.org/)

Mr. White cautioned the group to make sure it knows what it’s talking about. There are consequences of these types of policies, such as increased food prices, he said. Ms. Poyourow said she’d be satisfied with taking a basic position reflecting the OGWC recommendation as a way to just let the Metro Council know that SWAC feels that carbon pricing management would be beneficial in the context of organics, as it is in other areas such as transportation. Ms. Kochan agreed that materials are often left out of the carbon discussion, so chiming in with the message would be helpful. It’s good to put a message out there that Metro is supportive of carbon pricing.

The Commission’s paper didn’t weigh in on whether they support cap-and-trade or a carbon tax, Mr. Korot clarified. The latest context that Metro Council had, he continued, was based on emissions inventory work by the DEQ and Metro, which showed that roughly half the region’s emissions are associated with the production of goods and food.

Mr. White asked whether the policy would address only food grown in the Metro region, food grown in Oregon, the United States, or even internationally? One of the consequences of carbon pricing is that it would push food prices even higher, he said. Supporting both food rescue for the poor and carbon pricing that helps food prices skyrocket seems contradictory, he commented, and suggested that perhaps the DEQ's David Alloway could come and explain the concept to the group.

Mr. Walker commented that he'd be comfortable recommending that Metro further investigate what would work best for the region. Under "purpose relative to the food system," he suggested wording such as: "Metro shall support the work being done by the Oregon Global Warming Commission." He'd like to know a lot more about the concept before recommending that Metro "advocate." Ms. Kochan responded that the policy as shown doesn't commit Metro to a specific road. Ms. Poyourow was comfortable with the word "advocate" because it implies that further investigation will take place. She's fine with the statement as written.

The Committee talked about the current wording. Ms. Poyourow was unsure whether it's necessary to specify the Oregon Global Warming Commission, and prefers the policy as written. Mr. White felt that the word "advocate" is too strong and that he prefers recommending that Metro be aware of the work being done.

Ms. Kochan suggested "through pricing or other means." Mr. Winterhalter said that many studies point to pricing being the way to go, and he agrees. The issue is complicated, he admitted, but if we don't start advocating for some kind of change, it won't happen. Ms. Poyourow found the policy in alignment with Metro's work in transportation. Mr. Walker wondered if it really should include the clause focusing on food, or change it to "materials management." It could be a misstep to single out food. Ms. Kochan and Scott Keller suggested at least adding food as a component.

The group discussed further.

Mr. White said he'd be most comfortable if the focus of the recommendation wasn't on food. "We've all agreed we're going to advocate for something, and we all agreed we don't know exactly what that is." Mr. Korot reminded the group that the policy discussion paper is not intended to be given to Council, it's merely a discussion paper for the Committee itself.

Ms. Koppang suggested language along the lines of "Advocate for regulatory options to reduce the life cycle carbon intensity of products." This led to further discussion and a suggestion to append the following language: "Options considered by the OGWC were pricing signals such as emissions caps or carbon tax."

V Public Comment

Audience member Segeni Mungai said that for the consumer to understand carbon pricing, they'd need a breakdown of water costs, transportation costs, everything. Therefore, signs right in the stores with information about carbon taxing would be very helpful. It's a very complicated issue, and for carbon taxing to work, people will need the tools to help them understand it so they can make the right choices.

VI Next Steps

Mr. Korot will draft a summary of the set of options that came from this meeting and email it to the Committee. He'll then put together a report summarizing the conversations that led to SWAC's recommendations, to show the Metro Council how the decisions were made. He'll ask the members to point out glaring omissions or things that are represented incorrectly.

Once these recommendations are presented to Council, Mr. Korot continued, there are several pieces of the Solid Waste Roadmap that will lead to policy decisions and could benefit from SWAC discussion and recommendations. He asked the group if they'd like to take a hiatus and reconvene to discuss food rescue, or move on to another topic such as the Solid Waste Roadmap.

Mr. Keller suggested having David Alloway come and talk to the group could be a good meeting to further inform the Committee of the carbon / food issues. Mr. Walker responded that discussion of transfer capacity would be a natural link, as well.

Mr. Korot thanked the Committee for eleven months of great discussion on an important topic.

Prepared by:

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