

MEETING SUMMARY
METRO SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SWAC)

Metro Regional Center, Room 401

Thursday, July 21, 2011

9:00 – 11:00 am

Members / Alternates Present:

Paul Ehinger, Alternate Chair
Jennifer Erickson
Scott Keller
Theresa Koppang
Susan Millhauser

Leslie Kochan (substituting for Audrey O'Brien)
Megan Ponder (substituting for Bruce Walker)
Michelle Poyourow
Dave White
Rick Winterhalter

Members / Alternates Absent:

Matt Korot, Chair
JoAnn Herrigel
John Lucini

Amy Pepper
Bruce Walker
Adam Winston

Guests and Metro staff:

Kyle Curtis, PSU
Renee Curtis, PSU
Beth Cohen, Oregon Food Bank
Roberta Altstadt, Metro
Roy Brower, Metro

Aidan Gronauer, Metro
Alando Simpson, City of Roses Disposal
Dean Kampf, Waste Management or Oregon
Matt Miller, Gresham Sanitary Service

I. Welcome and Review of Agenda *Paul Ehinger*

Paul Ehinger welcomed the SWAC meeting attendees and mentioned that he was filling in as chair for Matt Korot. Mr. Ehinger mentioned that Roberta Altstadt would be filming the meeting to document outreach activities happening at Metro. Mr. Ehinger asked meeting attendees to introduce themselves. Mr. Ehinger stated that today's agenda topic will be to report on the studies done in the Metro region on food waste donations. The goal is to present information from the reports and allow members of SWAC to ask questions of the presenters at the end of the presentations. Mr. Ehinger mentioned that the food rescue conversation will continue on to other SWAC meetings, so members should think of questions about policies around food waste that they want to see discussed at later meetings.

**II. Food Donation Infrastructure Research Presentations & DiscussionJennifer Erickson
Beth Cohen
Renee Curtis**

Jennifer Erickson presented an overview of the history of Metro's involvement with food rescue programs and what has been done to date (see attached "SWAC Outline"). Ms. Erickson revealed a brief overview of the current studies from the Oregon Food Bank and Community Environmental Services. Ms. Erickson introduced the research study authors and presenters.

Beth Cohen presented a broad overview of the research findings from their study on strengthening food donation through policies and programs (see attached).

Renee Curtis presented on the research findings and recommendations from their study on supporting food donation infrastructure (see attached).

III. Public Comment on Food Donation Infrastructure Research All

Michelle Poyourow asked if food donation was declining due to the food that could be donated being composted instead. Ms. Curtis said that this correlation has been seen in San Francisco, so there may be a potential concern here. Ms. Cohen added that the amount of food waste has decreased in part due to better tracking systems and improved food planning efforts, so we need to get creative with food donation ideas. Ms. Poyourow asked what was meant by food surplus. Kyle Curtis said that some farmers donate a part of their plot for the Oregon Food Bank to grow donation food and in San Francisco a few restaurants cook extra food to be donated.

Rick Winterhalter asked who the food donors are that take advantage of the federal tax deductions and donations. Ms. Cohen said that statewide only about 75 farmers took advantage of the state crop donation tax credit last year. The incentive was meant to offset the cost of surplus crop. Ms. Cohen stated that the federal tax credit is broader and covers corporations and other agencies. Mr. Winterhalter asked what other agencies the Oregon Food Bank reaches out to on food rescue. Ms. Cohen said that there is a statewide network of about 20 regional food banks and two of them are in the Metro region. Mr. Curtis added that the research study found a connection with churches.

Leslie Kochan mentioned that 35-50% of food waste comes from residential homes. Ms. Cohen stated that the Oregon Food Bank offers nutrition education outreach classes to families on smart shopping, healthily cooking and meal planning. Ms. Kochan mentioned the City of Portland's BeReourceful campaign. Ms. Kochan asked if there has been an attempt to prioritize a list of the top five things Metro can do. Ms. Curtis said that it is a goal to prioritize the list, but serving as an information resource would be on top. Ms. Cohen added the need to have Metro develop a baseline gap analysis. Ms. Erickson discussed the DEQ Intel food waste survey in which Intel measure and weighed their food waste and implemented major process improvements.

Dave White asked about other potential donors. Ms. Cohen mentioned institutional donors and food drive programs. Mr. Curtis added hospitals and production companies like Kraft.

Theresa Koppang commented on the challenge to marry food donation and composting when working on food scrap planning. Mr. Curtis offered the slogan “Donation is best, compost the rest”.

Mr. White commented on Metro’s capacity and roles. Mr. White stated that Metro’s focus is waste reduction and maybe they should leave the food recovery work to the county’s health and human services departments. Ms. Curtis acknowledged these concerns and reiterated Metro’s need for 3rd party support. Ms. Erickson mentioned the issue of Metro’s limited staff time and resources dedicated to food recovery. Ms. Erickson said that we need to access the current climate and who has the resources to do the work.

Mr. Winterhalter mentioned the high turnover at food donation agencies and the loss of knowledge that comes with that. Ms. Curtis said that although businesses are getting better at reducing food waste, portion size has increased. Susan Millhauser brought up the need to work with franchised haulers. Ms. Millhauser mentioned that Lake Oswego is currently looking at hauler rates for compost and possible incentives. Ms. Millhauser said that Allied Waste has already started doing outreach on composting.

Ms. Poyourow mentioned looking at the economic effects on haulers. Ms. Poyourow said posed the question of how to get haulers involved in outreach. Mr. White pointed out that everything trickles down to the rate payers. Mr. White said that maybe we should keep the decisions at the local level and let the local jurisdictions be the role models. Mr. Winterhalter mentioned the idea of considering the value of food waste. Mr. Winterhalter proposed adding the landfill cost of \$90 a ton to the disposal rate.

Dean Kampfer stated that Waste Management wants to help in this social effort of food rescue and believes that anyone that has a budget to help should do so. Mr. Kampfer asked how much emphases is placed of food donation regionally. Ms. Erikson stated that the Recycle at Work specialists are the experts that are sent in to help local businesses reduce food waste and connecting them with the Fork It Over program. Ms. Erickson said that Metro does not require that local businesses to donate surplus food but they encourage it. Mr. Kampfer mentioned the idea of having a factsheet with the Recycling Information Center phone number for haulers to leave behind with customers.

Mr. White asked about the City of Portland’s enforcement of a sewer charge for putting food down the disposal. Mr. White said that if we put a price tag on it businesses might think about their options of composting and donation instead of disposal. Megan Ponder stated that the City of Portland is implementing the sewer charge in phases and is currently in the notification phase.

IV. Next Steps *Paul Ehinger*

Mr. Ehinger asked for next steps. Ms. Erickson stated that the report will be distributed to SWAC once it is finalized. Ms. Curtis mentioned that she will provide a final report in two weeks. Based on the comments from today’s SWAC meeting, the next SWAC meeting will include a draft of policy recommendation options.

Adjourned 10:28 am

SWAC Outline
July 21, 2011

Background

- 27% of food produced for human consumption in the US annually is thrown out.
- The majority of this food is fruits, vegetables, milk and grains.
- Recovering only 5% would have fed 4 million people for one day.
- Oregon is one of the hungriest states in the nation.
- Metro region disposes of over 200,000 tons of food per year.
- It costs this region nearly \$13 million annually to landfill food (transfer, transport and landfill costs only---\$58.35/ton. Does not include collection or other fees).
- Even if only half of that landfilled food was edible, it was worth \$300 million to a food bank (at a value of \$1.50 per pound).
- Metro has been involved with food rescue since 1996 beginning with our partnership with OFB on the Harvest Share Program
- Metro began granting infrastructure development funds to FRAs in 1996 at a small scale, but developed a formal program in 2000-01.
- The program lasted until 2004-05, and granted a total of over \$800,000 in funds to purchase trucks, freezers, refrigerators and other equipment.
- For every \$1 spent there was a \$31 benefit.
- 2003 Metro conducted a food donation barrier/benefit study to better understand what motivated donation behavior.
- The result of that study led to the development of the Fork it Over program which seeks to educate donors and link them with the closest food rescue agency in their community that meets their needs.
- The goal is to build partnerships within the local community, reduce waste and increase edible food donation.

Introduce Studies

OFB Research:

Identify the most effective policies that strengthen food waste prevention and food donation

1. Research, inventory and prioritize existing government food policies with a focus on food waste prevention and food donation.
2. Determine the most effective elements and initiatives of those policies by evaluating successes and failures.
3. Compare those elements against local conditions in the Metro region to determine compatibility of approach and suitability for local application.
4. Develop a model government food policy template for use in the Metro region utilizing the best practices identified as well as local conditions.
5. Identify key elements that would enhance elected bodies' capacity to serve as leaders and advocates for best practices in food waste prevention and food donation in light of their roles, responsibilities and practical limitations.

PSU Barrier/Benefit Study:

1. Revisit in order to affirm or refute the key findings and critical elements of the Food Donation Barrier/Benefit Study conducted in 2003
2. Identify other food rescue system stakeholders not normally represented (such as small food rescue agencies and non-Oregon Food Bank affiliates) and survey a representative subset to understand their needs, limitations and any other special circumstances they face.
3. Perform an analysis to identify major gaps or environmental changes in the region's food donation infrastructure.
4. Research, inventory and prioritize other successful programs and initiatives and identify best practices that can be applied locally.
5. Recommend the most appropriate role for Metro to play in the system to close those gaps at both the policy and programmatic level.

Intro Beth and Renee

Beth Cohen is a public policy advocate at Oregon Food Bank working on policies and projects in the 3-county metro region that support a local food system and better connect local efforts with the emergency food system. Prior to working at the food bank, Beth worked at Metro as a policy analyst in the Council office providing research and supporting a range of projects including an analysis of whether and how Metro could play a larger role in regional food systems work. Beth has a Masters in urban and regional planning from Portland State University.

Renée Bogin Curtis, MUS, is a project manager with PSU's Community Environmental Services and has overseen numerous sustainability projects and studies for Metro Regional Government and local government sustainability departments. She specializes in researching environmental behavior, attitudes and perceived barriers among populations in underserved communities and draws from her findings to help design outreach campaigns. A doctorate candidate in Urban Studies, she examines people-to-people networks as sustainable alternatives to corporate-based globalization.

Kyle Curtis, MPA is a food policy specialist for PSU's Community Environmental Services. He served as a steering committee member of the Multnomah Food Initiative and helped manage the Montavilla Farmers Market for two seasons. He studies food systems research, participates in two citizen-led East Portland garden groups and recently launched a successful community food forum to deal with food equity in East Portland. He is also an informal adviser to City Councilor Nick Fish's Growing Opportunities (GO!) Team.

Oregon Food Bank's food recovery efforts

- Fresh Alliance program recovers surplus food from grocery stores across Oregon since 2002
 - 190 stores across the state participate
 - All major grocery chains involved (Fred Meyer, Albertsons, Walmart, Whole Foods, Safeway, Target)
 - Last year, recovered 7.1 million pounds of food across the state (2.1 million in the metro region)
 - Successful program that could provide a model for food recovery at a smaller scale
- OFB has an agreement with St. Vincent de Paul that they will recover prepared food and OFB will not

How policy can strengthen surplus food donation

- Collect information to answer the following questions:
 - What are the impacts of existing federal, state and local policies surrounding food donation?
 - What is the policy and programmatic framework around food waste reduction in the Portland metro area?
 - What are other jurisdictions around the country doing in relation food donation and food waste reduction?
- Findings are informed by interviews with local government staff, staff from jurisdictions and food rescue efforts around the country, local food rescue experts and feedback from stakeholders at the Multnomah Food Summit.

Findings

- 1. The federal and state policies around food donation are intended to enable local governments, school districts and businesses to donate food, but could be more widely distributed to potential donors.**
 - Federal and state Good Samaritan laws
 - Federal legislation allowing food purchased through federal programs and federal contracts to be donated
 - Federal tax deduction and state crop donation tax credit
- 2. Local governments across the country and in the metro region are elevating food into policy and planning**
 - Comprehensive food policies and frameworks
 - Sustainable purchasing policies that prefer/specify local food
 - Policies/programs to reduce food waste
- 3. Food donation is not at the forefront of resource conservation efforts in local governments**
 - Most local governments aren't partnering with the food rescue agencies on food donation.
 - Metro's Fork it Over! program is a model program and has an opportunity to continue being a leader.
 - Examples of public sector efforts in other cities
 - Los Angeles Surplus Food Policy
 - Seattle's Food Recovery Infrastructure grant program
 - San Francisco's considerations of food donation policy
 - Attempts in California Legislature to mandate or encourage food donation
 - Important lessons and takeaways
 - Limitations of policy solutions to address logistical challenges of food donation
 - Need for collaboration with the food industry, food banks and food rescue agencies
 - Importance of raising awareness about food waste and hunger issues with general public

4. Multiple barriers to increased food donation exist including

- Limited capacity of the food rescue agencies to accept, transport and store recovered food
- Cost to businesses for sorting and packing surplus food
- Lack of a dynamic information sharing mechanism to respond to surplus food donation opportunities

5. More information and education about a variety of topics related to food donation is needed

- Research on the economic decisions that businesses make around food donation
- Information about how much food smaller generators are wasting
- Expanded materials to suit broader audiences on topics like options for food donation and liability protection

Policy and program options

Strengthening food donation will require collaboration between the public and private sectors. The public sector typically plays the following roles:

- Policy and program development
- Convening stakeholders
- Providing resources, technical assistance, education and outreach

The following policy and program options are opportunities where Metro could take the lead or support partners.

1. Expand understanding of opportunities for increased food donation

- The scale and nature of waste for smaller scale generators such as restaurants
- Costs and benefit calculation for generators to donate food
- Economic impacts of increased food donation as part of regional economic analysis of food systems

2. Identify where the public sector can better leverage its purchasing, contracting and permitting authorities

- Conduct more complete inventory of the public sector's food purchasing throughout the region.
- Develop model language to mandate or encourage surplus food donation in public sector contracts.

3. Utilize existing solid waste policy framework and infrastructure to drive increased food donation

- Leverage existing solid waste system to strengthen capacity of food donation infrastructure.
- Structure solid waste collection fees to incentivize surplus food donation.
- Develop a regulatory solution to enforce food donation and composting.

4. Address the logistical gaps in the existing system

- Partner with the private sector to increase capacity of infrastructure for surplus food donation through technical assistance, grants and other resources.

5. Increase public knowledge and awareness around food donation

- Expand Fork it Over! materials and other outreach efforts to target additional audiences.
- Expand branding around surplus food donation.
- Frame food donation as a strategy for community building, increasing equity and promoting sustainability.

Supporting the Food Donation Infrastructure

Presentation on July 21, 2011 to SWAC by Renée Bogin Curtis & Kyle Curtis, Community Environmental Services (CES)
Contact info: rbogin@pdx.edu, curtisk@pdx.edu, 503.725.8447

Overview: CES conducted research to assess gaps in the Portland Metro region's food donation infrastructure in April-July, 2011 in order to evaluate potential roles for Metro Regional Government in supporting this infrastructure.

Methods

- **Multnomah Food Summit Workshop** to identify perceived gaps in the infrastructure. Participants included representatives from the Oregon Food Bank (OFB), under-the-radar food rescue agencies and businesses.
- **Business survey** with 50 Portland-based businesses including restaurants, farmers markets; ethnic, small and large grocery stores; food producers and generators, culinary schools, college dining facilities, and school lunch programs.
- **Organization survey** with 25 food rescue agencies around the region with efforts to include under-the-radar agencies.
- **Informal interviews** with Metro staff, local food waste and donation experts, and non-local donation program leaders.
- **Literature review** from Internet research of food donation programs and from information gathered at conferences.

Summary of Findings

- Food donations have reduced. Surplus is down as businesses plan better and there is less federal support for donations, but food insecurity has increased. The implementation of compost programs has had no *obvious* impact yet but potential is significant. Food *waste* has reduced, but an increase in food donations supports both environmental and sustainability goals; donations have a smaller carbon footprint than production of additional food and composting.
- The current business climate is receptive to donations. Community and employee goodwill recognition helps retain donors. Information about tax incentives, savings and what/how to donate can help recruit new donors.
- Given the newness and enthusiasm around composting, it's a good time to also promote the social and environmental benefits of donations and to consider PSAs to expose the changed profile of hunger.
- Transportation, storage, timing, coordination, access to information and volunteer/ staff labor are still major barriers.
- Most rescue agencies participate in both formal and informal networks, often with the OFB and with other groups.

Significant Changes from the 2003 Food Waste Prevention and Donations: Barriers and Benefits Study

Climate: Business surplus, food donations and food rescue agencies resources are down as a result of economic conditions. Compost is more widespread. Rescue organization *patrons* have changed (there are more professionals).

Incentives: Employee and community goodwill provide the greatest incentives for businesses to donate.

Barriers: Coordination (time, storage, transportation, labor) remains significant. Liability concerns are *less* significant.

Information Sources: The Internet and to a lesser extent social media are now major sources for information.

Food Donation Infrastructure Current Components

Networks and Relationships

Advantages: Many agencies participate in both formal and informal networks between donors and agencies and between agencies. Many are connected to both OFB networks and non-OFB networks which accept perishable food.

Gaps: Turnover among staff and volunteers at businesses and agencies impacts relationships. Non-OFB affiliates surveyed have limited transportation and volunteer capacities. OFB- affiliates deal with time and donation inflexibilities.

Support: Support formal and informal networks. Tools are need for "word of mouth" networks. Toolkits could provide volunteer and staff training and emphasize relationship building, maintenance and ways to adapt to high turnover.

Coordination

Advantages: Networks to help reduce coordination, transport and storage challenges include OFB for non-perishable foods; St. Vincent de Paul, Birch Community Services, Urban Gleaners and B-line for perishables. Metro's Fork it Over! (FIO!) program helps match donors to agencies.

Gaps: Logistics of time, labor, volunteer management, food handling, and quality assurance are major challenges.

Support: Coordination and training of volunteers could help. Assist agencies far from HUBs, without transportation.

Information

Advantages: Businesses use Internet as a primary source for food donation info. FIO! could become more pertinent.

Gaps: More knowledge is needed about what and how to donate, about Good Sam laws, tax incentives and FIO!.

Support: Outreach campaign to disperse information and to promote FIO! is advisable.

Content of Food Donations

Advantages: More quantities of fresh, healthy and perishable food are being donated than in previous times.

Gaps: Still, sufficient info about what can be donated is lacking: fresh produce, meat, dairy and perishables. Supply changes result in varying storage and handling responses, which agencies aren't always adapted for.

Support: Broadcast information about what can/can't be donated. Creating or purchasing sufficient storage capacity to handle supply could help.

Incentives

Advantages: Staff and community goodwill are strong motivators for current donors. The business climate is receptive.

Gaps: Knowledge is lacking about tax incentives, protection against liability, and awareness of processes. Business concerns about increased labor and their perceptions of having nothing to donate are also barriers.

Support: Promote benefits (emphasize tax incentives) and explain simplified processes. Pursue and provide data about potential cost savings.

Metro: Programs, Capacity and Roles

Fork it Over!

Advantages: FIO! provides coordination and matches donors with agencies.

Gaps: It's underutilized. One-third of food rescue agencies surveyed had never heard of it and those who had, received no donations. The majority of businesses surveyed had never heard of it as well.

Support: Promote it more heavily. Consider housing it in another Internet location to simplify and expand the program.

Metro's Capacity

Strengths: Acting as convener, systems design, toolkits, expansions of existing programs, information provision.

Limitations: Restrictions on technology, website, funding, personnel resources and capacity to implement new programs.

Metro's Role: Options for Consideration

1. Serve as an information provider. Provide user-friendly information and motivational messages.

- **Clearinghouse:** Continue to provide a one-stop shop for information on how and what to donate.
- **Messaging:** Combine donation information *and* messaging with compost campaigns. Promote food donations as taking care of "our community." Promote tier approach for food waste with donation first and compost second. Emphasize tax incentives and Good Sam laws.
- **Traditional media:** Produce Public Service Announcements on the changing profile of hunger and greater environmental benefits of donations. Promote FIO! program with print, radio and television media.

2. Update and consider expansion of FIO! program. Network with community partners.

- **FIO!:** Update info to emphasize environmental value of donations. Encourage local government with website links to FIO!, to also briefly mention its environmental and community value. Provide info on tax incentives and details about garbage savings. Promote FIO!, with rescue agencies to renew their support of the program. Track site usage.
- **Regional partners:** Collaborate with local governments to combine FIO! information *and* food donation promotion along with compost information. Support relationships between agencies and businesses. Incorporate haulers in outreach efforts.
- **Online content:** Expand FIO! to provide information or links to volunteer resources and opportunities.

3. Consider partnership with or support of third-party organization.

- **Website:** Host FIO! externally to incorporate volunteer coordination, training and potentially social media tools.
- **Staff:** Provide staff to oversee coordination of volunteers, donation distribution, and donor/ agency connections.

4. Provide infrastructure support to increase capacity of organizations to capture available donations.

- **Equipment:** Provide grant funding for transportation, storage equipment or for capacity to support informal networks.
- **Space:** Explore options for shared storage spaces in existing facilities with capacity or develop capacity, if feasible.
- **Expand operations:** Support efforts to pick up food at off-hours. Provide grants to organizations with this capacity.
- **Education:** Incorporate surplus food donation and diversion as part of curriculum at culinary institutes.

5. Assess future opportunities to expand Metro's role in the food donation infrastructure.

- **Evaluation:** Conduct case studies including waste audits and cost/benefit analyses to demonstrate the environmental and financial benefits of food donations for businesses.
- **Creative opportunities:** Encourage innovation and/or collaboration among rescue organizations. Develop creative ways to streamline the donation infrastructure for perishables and prepared foods. Explore relationships with community kitchen programs. Promote "planned surplus" among food producers and generators; pursue tax benefits.