

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**METRO SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SWAC)**

Metro Regional Center, Room 401

Thursday, September 15, 2011

9:00 – 11:00 am

**Members / Alternates Present:**

|                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Matt Korot, Chair | Susan Millhauser  |
| JoAnn Herrigel    | Amy Pepper        |
| Scott Keller      | Bruce Walker      |
| Theresa Koppang   | Dave White        |
| John Lucini       | Rick Winterhalter |

**Members Absent:**

|               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Leslie Kochan | Michelle Poyourow |
|---------------|-------------------|

**Guests and Metro staff:**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Roy Brower, Metro            | Aidan Gronauer, Metro                  |
| Beth Cohen, Oregon Food Bank | Adam Hyde, Blue Tree Strategies        |
| Easton Cross, Allied Waste   | Ray Phelps, Allied Waste               |
| Jennifer Erickson, Metro     | Alando Simpson, City of Roses Disposal |

**I. Welcome and Review of Agenda .....*Matt Korot***

Matt Korot welcomed the SWAC meeting attendees. Mr. Korot mentioned that the primary objective of this meeting is to continue the discussion from the July 21, 2011 SWAC meeting and possibly finish the discussion around policy options for the food donation infrastructure.

**II. Food Donation Infrastructure Policies .....*All***

Mr. Korot presented the *Food Rescue Infrastructure Policy Options* document (see attached). The document reflects the findings from the two studies: *Strengthening Food Donation through Policies and Programs* and *Supporting the Food Donation Infrastructure* that were presented at the July SWAC meeting. Mr. Korot stated that the document is intended to provide a starting point for today's discussion. Mr. Korot asked the group to review the potential policy options with the objective of either determining whether to move any options forward for Council consideration or identifying addition information needed before such a determination can be made.

Rick Winterhalter asked if the statement that less food is going to food rescue agencies than previously was an indication that less food waste is available, or that businesses are generating the same amount and throwing away more. Jennifer Erickson said that it is a combination of things. The USDA food commodity is decreasing and demand is increasing. Ms. Erickson stated that the big thing that we do not know is how much of the material generated could have been donated, instead of going into the waste stream. Ms. Erickson mentioned that there is anecdotal evidence coming from San Francisco that composting is effecting food donation, but the

businesses interviewed in our region say they are simply tightening their belts due to the economy and have no food to donate. Beth Cohen concurred that the demand for donated food is growing.

Mr. Korot mentioned that the ideas for potential Metro policies are not fully inclusive and are meant to address the needs presented in the reports. The first option addresses the coordination need; the second option helps tackle the staffing and logistical challenges; and the third option touches on the need for education and outreach. Susan Millhauser asked if an outside agency had been identified to provide better coordination among food rescue agencies. Mr. Korot pointed out that the Oregon Food Bank would be a likely candidate based on capacity, but Metro would solicit proposals if this option was selected.

Ms. Cohen mentioned the need to include tax incentive information as part of the outreach education. JoAnn Herrigel asked what enhancements to the Fork It Over tools would entail. Ms. Erickson stated that Metro does not have the staff capacity, budget or expertise to take the tools to the next level. Ms. Erickson mentioned that a PSU group that focuses on food issues showed interest in managing the Fork It Over program tools. Enhancement features could include adding a volunteer hub; incorporating a Twitter feed or notification option; and refreshing the look of the website. Ms. Erickson said that the current system covers information such as the Good Samaritan laws; a list of over 100 food rescue agencies with a GIS mapping tool; and a follow your donation slideshow.

Scott Keller asked if the food rescue agencies currently have the capacity to pick up food. Ms. Erickson stated that currently food donations are down and the demand is up, so the agencies have the capacity to take more food. Ms. Erickson pointed out that the food rescue agencies need assistance with outreach. Ms. Erickson said that Snow Cap in the City of Gresham does a good job at sharing volunteers with other food rescue agencies. Dave White pointed out the need for a food generators forum to get all of the players in one room. Mr. White mentioned getting the Oregon Restaurants Association and their members in a room and ask them what they need and what we can do. Ms. Erickson stated that the Oregon Food Bank has quarterly meetings with the Industry Advisory Council. Ms. Erickson referred to the B-Shares program, Chef's Collaborative, and Multnomah County Food Summit. Ms. Erickson stated that studies showed that there is no additional labor cost associated with donation, because something has to be done with the food waste.

Mr. White asked why there is currently less food going to food rescue agencies. Mr. Korot pointed out the two variables at play. First we have been more successful at getting the word out about waste reduction and second the food generators have been more successful at not generating as much food waste. Ms. Erickson mentioned that we know that there is food waste, what we don't know is how much of that food waste was donatable. Ms. Herrigel talked about setting up site assessments with restaurants and showing them how to setup a better system. Mr. Keller asked about the potential to add outreach as a part of the City of Portland's composting program that is rolling out soon, covering both reuse and composting options. Ms. Erickson mentioned the idea of repeating the 2000 Organic Waste Generation Assessment on a smaller scale.

Theresa Koppang asked what the restaurants interviewed thought. Ms. Erickson stated that they had questions about how to work with the Oregon Food Bank and about making the food donation process more streamlined. Ms. Erickson mentioned that one small restaurant said that

they only have small amounts of various food items left over at the end of the day, so it makes more sense for them to have planned surplus by selecting to purposefully prepare a large meal specifically for donation.

Bruce Walker pointed out that the City of Portland wants to incorporate food donation education into their messaging about the new composting program. Mr. Walker mentioned that Metro's funding for the BRR workgroup is phasing out and the Recycling Specialist would ideally have been the ones to do the outreach education piece. Mr. Korot reiterated the options he heard from the SWAC members as enhancing the Fork It Over tools, offering onsite assistance, and combining donation with the composting messaging. Ms. Erickson said the messaging should be 'Donation is best, compost the rest'. Ms. Herrigel mentioned a hybrid of enhancing the Fork It Over program tools and putting an additional \$30k towards offering onsite assistance. Mr. Winterhalter stated that we need to really enhance our understanding of the infrastructure needs, see if there are other food aggregators out there, and obtain detailed answers to what we don't know so we can train the trainers. Mr. Winterhalter mentioned the politics between food rescue agencies and the fact that we are moving to a focus on upstream solutions.

John Lucini pointed out the 80-20 rule where 80% of the waste is coming from 20% of the generators. Mr. Lucini said that donation might not be cost effective for some generators who only have a small amount of food waste available for pickup. Ms. Erickson discussed local organizations such as B-Line who make deliveries in the Portland urban core on motorized trikes. B-Line's reverse logistics model has been successful at moving food donations directly from donators to Sisters of the Road rescue agency. Ms. Millhauser mentioned looking at funding the Recycle at Work specialists to do the outreach education, as opposed to funding another organization to carry out this task. Ms. Koppang asked if moving the Fork It Over program to another organization would leverage resources. Mr. Korot said that it could if we went with an organization such as the Oregon Food Bank. Mr. Keller pointed out that all of the Recycle at Work specialists are not going away, so we can still cover the outreach in limited capacity and possibly use PSU students as interns. Mr. Korot clarified Metro's funding for the BRR workgroup as \$400k dedicated to the Recycle at Work program over the last four years with funding ending in June 30, 2012. Mr. Winterhalter brought up the idea that since there will be an increase in funding for options 1 and 2, why not spend the first year on research and then focus on enhancing the Fork It Over program and offering onsite training as a subsequent investment.

Mr. Keller asked about working on the Fork It Over program enhancements now so the Recycle at Work specialists will have something to direct the generators to. Ms. Erickson said that we could do some of the project scoping this year, but the funding would not happen until next fiscal year. Mr. Walker pointed out the huge need for food in our community currently and wanting to do something now to boost awareness and help with food recovery. Mr. Walker mentioned setting up a forum and discussing the barriers with food donation. Ms. Erickson said that it would be very helpful to get answers on the amount of food waste generated from smaller businesses that is appropriate for donation.

Mr. White stated that he would like to see \$50k spent on enhancements to Fork It Over tools and training for Recycle at Work specialists. Mr. White mentioned having local jurisdictions notify their council of the need and inform them on what SWAC is currently doing. Mr. White also stated the need to have a forum and asking for industry leaders help. Ms. Herrigel mentioned joining with an existing forum and inviting other industry members. Ms. Erickson proposed the idea of looking back at the 2003 Fork It Over program model and nurturing some of those

relationships. Mr. Keller said that food rescue is waste reduction and the Recycle at Work program has money budgeted for outreach with no target identified. Mr. Keller proposed having Recycle at Work specialists do an outreach campaign on food donation this fiscal year. The SWAC members expressed support for this idea. Mr. Walker mentioned working with other private partners on reverse logistics ideas.

Mr. Korot summarized the discussion and confirmed that SWAC members had coalesced around option 3, enhancing the Fork It Over program, while also wanting to see further research to fill data gaps and continuing efforts to build partnerships.

**III. Public Comment on Food Donation Infrastructure Policies ..... All**

Mr. Korot asked for additional public comment. No additional public comment was received.

**IV. Next Steps .....Matt Korot**

Mr. Korot mentioned that there might not be an October SWAC meeting.

Mr. Korot stated that the next topic for SWAC would be something related to the Solid Waste Roadmap.

Mr. Korot invited SWAC members to attend the Metro Council work session at 2pm on Tuesday, September 27<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Solid Waste Roadmap. Mr. Korot said that he will give a brief overview on the waste reduction elements of the RSWMP and there will be a preliminary stakeholder investment plan introduced. Mr. Korot asked SWAC members to send him an email if they are interested in receiving updates from this Metro Council work session.

**Adjourned 10:25 am**

**Metro Solid Waste Advisory Committee**  
***Food Rescue Infrastructure Policy Options***  
**September 15, 2011**

The information below reflects the findings from the two studies: *Strengthening Food Donation through Policies and Programs* and *Supporting the Food Donation Infrastructure* that were presented at the July 21, 2011 SWAC meeting.

- | <b>What We Know</b>   |
|---|
| 1. Many businesses state that they need more information in order to make decisions on donating excess edible food.                         |
| 2. Preparation of food for donation is a barrier to participation.  |
| 3. Food rescue agencies do not have enough staffing to make their services as effective and efficient as possible.                          |
| 4. There is a need for improved coordination between food rescue agencies and between agencies and donors.                                  |
| 5. Less food is going to donation than previously.  |
| 6. Demand for donated food remains high.  |
| 7. There is a minimal role for Metro to play with large food generators because they are targeted by the Oregon Food Bank for partnerships. |

- | <b>What We Don't Know</b>   |
|---|
| 1. The amount of food waste generated from smaller businesses that is appropriate for donation. |
| 2. The impact that food waste composting programs have on donation.                             |

**Ideas for potential Metro policies**

1. Fund a position with an outside agency to provide better coordination among food rescue agencies in the transportation and volunteer services needed to effectively serve donating businesses.  
Rough cost estimate: \$75,000 - \$100,000 per year
2. Provide funding to select food rescue agencies to increase their staffing to provide food pick-up services to donating businesses  
Rough cost estimate: \$75,000 - \$150,000 or more per year
3. Enhance the Fork It Over! program tools and information and update them more frequently  
Rough cost estimate: \$50,000 initially; \$30,000 annually
4. Other ideas from SWAC members?

### **Metro staff perspective**

Staff's preliminary opinion is that there is inadequate justification for investment in the food rescue infrastructure at this time because:

- There is inadequate data on the amount of food generated that could be donated
- Anecdotal information from business and food rescue agencies suggests that there is less edible surplus food generated by businesses than previously
- There is a well-developed infrastructure for capturing edible food from large generators

The findings from the two studies do suggest that additional investment in the Fork It Over program would be beneficial, even with these uncertainties. Making Fork It Over more robust would be consistent with Objective 1 of the Commercial Organics focus area in the RSWMP: *Provide outreach and education programs for targeted businesses to support and increase organic waste prevention and diversion practices*. It would also leverage planned outreach work by local governments with food waste generators as these jurisdictions implement food waste recycling collection programs.