RED FENDER
CONSULTING, LLC

Preassessment Report

Metro South Station

MAY 2012

Metro

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Metro South Station ("MSS") is a widely used regional transfer station located in Oregon City, Oregon. Opened in 1983, MSS was originally envisioned as a transfer facility and an adjunct to a mass burn facility that was never built. It's footprint, layout, and design did not contemplate material recovery, which is now a standard part of waste collection and transfer systems.

Today, MSS serves a variety of clientele. On any given day, commercial waste hauling trucks enter the facility alongside pick-up trucks driven by self-haulers. Commercial waste is dumped into a large pit, where it is compacted and shipped to the Columbia Ridge Landfill. Self-haul debris is emptied and source-separated to the best extent possible in several flat floor buildings. MSS also accepts recycled material and hazardous waste.

To adapt to the demands of material recovery, MSS has undergone considerable transformation since it was first constructed. The talented team that runs the facility, backed by the supporting staff at Metro headquarters, have done a yeoman's job over the past 29 years adapting the facility to a changing waste stream. These adaptations, however, have created a number of important issues that confront MSS today.

- Capacity limitations, exacerbated by self-help clientele (self-haul makes up approximately 70% of the trips made to MSS but generates only 25% of the waste delivered to the facility)
- Traffic and circulation issues, both on the site and the surrounding area
- Materials recovery rates below targets
- Questions about how the facility fits within the Oregon City Town Center project
- The expiration of the 2019 waste disposal contract, which could result in the reconfiguration of the disposal system and the station's role
- The ability of MSS to serve an increasingly-complex waste stream moving into the future

MSS provides a vital service to the Portland area. Its customer base is loyal, it generates ongoing revenue for neighborhood improvement projects, and it's been part of the community for nearly three decades. However, given the demands placed on it, and drawing on a number of studies and surveys of its services and customers, MSS is struggling to meet the current needs of its customer base. Since Metro's mandate includes long-term planning, there are also concerns about how MSS will meet future needs if it is already a capacity today.

To determine what changes should be made to MSS, if any, the Metro South Waste Roadmap Project is conducting an 18-24 month project titled, "Assess Adequacy of Services for the Metro South Station Service Area." Chuck Geyer leads the project with team members Penny Erikson, Bryce Jacobson, Josh Naramore, and Matt Tracy.

The project has three stages.

1. A review of the solid waste transfer system in the Metro South service area.
2. A comprehensive needs assessment of MSS customers
3. The development of options to meet any unmet needs.

As part of the project, Red Fender Consulting was hired to provide the parameters of a process to scope the needs assessment.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The project team is following generally accepted protocols for a needs assessment project. These include:

- Preassessment. Determine the overall scope and plan for the assessment project to ensure that the implementation goes smoothly and generates justifiable information to make decisions.
- Assessment. The purpose of this phase is to implement the assessment in a methodologically sound manner that generates justifiable information to make decisions.
- Postassessment. The purpose of this phase is to share the information from the assessment, guide decisions, and support the implementation of recommendations.[1]

Preassessment covers the following steps:

- Establish the overall scope of the needs assessment project
- Identify the primary performance issues
- Define the data requirements
- Create a management plan
- Validate the management plan

The last step—validation of the management plan—will take place after a review of this document and a final team meeting.

STEP 1: ESTABLISH THE PROJECT SCOPE

The project team took a two-step approach to establish the project scope.

Step 1: Lay the initial groundwork.

- Set the project goals
    - Establish a comprehensive overview of current services, customer types (and various subsets of these classifications), and state of sustainable practices in the Metro South service area
    - Determine the variables or factors to examine through the needs assessment
    - Identify customers' current and future service needs and gaps in the Metro South service area
    - Using performance criteria, develop a list of policy options to satisfy customer needs. Rank the options and develop conceptual designs and preliminary costs for recommended approaches
- Set the parameters for the way in which the project will be conducted

[1] Watkins, Ryan, West Meiers, Maurya, and Visser, Yusura Laila, *A Guide to Assessing Needs* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2012) 50-53.

- An open and transparent process
- Reach out to all parties who may have a say in MSS' future
- Have MSS provide the highest level of service to the community
- Balance all of the components—fiscal prudence, customer needs, environmental concerns, and a safe work environment, to name a few—in order to find the highest and best use of the facility

- Draft an initial list of MSS primary performance issues
- Determine which individuals and organizations should be contacted during the preassessment and assessment period

The team accomplished these tasks with two meetings held in early April, 2012.

Step 2: Review the groundwork with a wider audience of preassessment individuals to ensure accuracy and completeness.

The project originally anticipated a workshop to review the initial groundwork. After the groundwork phase was complete, however, it became clear that a more targeted approach to the review process would be more effective. Three meetings were held in April and May 2012 with following individuals:

- Meeting 1: Rick Winterhalter
- Meeting 2: Bob McMillan, Jim Quinn, Ken Ray, Rob Smoot, Scott Klag, Jen High, Vicki Kolberg and Bruce Philbrick
- Meeting 3: Dan Cooper and Andy Cotugno

Each of the three meetings had a similar format: review and discuss the initial performance issue list developed by the project team, adjust the issue priority rankings (if necessary), and review the assessment participant list on a by-issue basis for accuracy and completeness.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE PRIMARY PERFORMANCE ISSUES

ISSUE CRITERIA

The chief purpose of the preassessment phase was to identify the performance issues confronting MSS in advance of writing the RFP. The team used the following accomplish this.

- Establish the list of performance issues
- Prioritize each item on the list
- Determine the tools that would be needed to perform the needs assessment for that issue (e.g., intercept survey, one-on-one meeting)
- Determine who should be contacted to gather the needs assessment data

PERFORMANCE ISSUE CATEGORIES

At the conclusion of the preassessment meetings, nineteen distinct performance issues were identified (see Appendix A for a complete list). They can be broken into the following categories:

- Space and capacity constraints
    - Despite best efforts at configuring the site, space to perform material recovery and store recovered material for transfer remains constrained
- Shortcomings in material recovery capability
    - From picking wet waste to reuse or sale of recovered material, MSS is struggling to meet its current recovery goals. There are also concerns on how to achieve higher recovery targets slated for the future
- Impact of self-haul customers on the facility workflow
    - MSS is very popular with self-haul clientele. However, their use of the facility brings circulation and efficiency issues that must be addressed during the assessment phase of the project.
- Physical traffic flow and safety—onsite and in/out of the facility
    - Even with recent infrastructure improvements around MSS, there are still safety concerns surrounding the amount of vehicular traffic entering, circulating within, and exiting the facility
- Psychological and attitudinal factors
    - From generational beliefs about the role of a transfer station to public opinion about recycling and garbage services, the team identified several intangible issues that are having an effect on the MSS operation
- Political and financial considerations
    - For example, the role of the facility vis-à-vis Oregon City Regional Center planning projects

There was a central question that ran through the preassessment team's work. As mentioned earlier, MSS was originally designed to be a waste transfer facility. Material recovery was introduced later and has grown to such an extent that it is now a primary site activity.

> *With a goal of 50% dry waste recovery (more than triple what the facility can currently achieve), and with the myriad of performance issues facing the facility, how can MSS do a better job with material recovery without moving recovery activity offsite as the last major MSS study suggested?*

This question is central to the MSS needs assessment project and must thread its way through the recommendations as the project data is analyzed.

PRIORITY RANKING

The team assigned a four-tiered ranking scale to each of the nineteen performance issues. The tally is shown below.

- Urgent 2
- High 6
- Medium..... 6
- Low 5

STEP 3: DEFINE THE DATA REQUIREMENTS

DATA SOURCES

The team identified a broad range of stakeholders who should have input on the MSS Needs Assessment project. These are summarized in the list below.

- Self-haulers
- Commercial haulers
- Local governments
- Vertically-integrated businesses owners and other businesses
- General public
- Key individuals with specific political, situational, or regulatory knowledge
- Other facilities that have experienced similar issues as MSS
- Other transfer station operators
- MSS employees

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

As the team reviewed the performance issues, they developed a list of data collection tools that could be used during the needs assessment project. Not only can these tools solicit information for the needs assessment (inbound data), they can also be used to communicate information about the project to interested parties (outbound data).

- Intercept survey
- Public opinion survey
- Small group interviews
- One-on-one interviews
- E-newsletters
- Metro website
- Presentation (outreach)
- Postcard notification

- Promotion and Advertising
- Open Houses
- Review of scalehouse-generated transactional data

STEP 4: CREATE A MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

The final part of the preassessment process is to offer a management plan that can be used to evaluate and subsequently monitor proposals to conduct the assessment

Goals

The goals of the needs assessment project are the same as listed above:

- Establish a comprehensive overview of current services, customer types (and various subsets of these classifications), and state of sustainable practices in the Metro South service area
- Determine the variables or factors to examine through the needs assessment
- Identify customers' current and future service needs and gaps in the Metro South service area
- Using performance criteria, develop a list of policy options to satisfy customer' needs. Rank the options and develop conceptual designs and preliminary costs for recommended approaches

Timeline (Exhibit B)

- Complete scoping phase (May, 2012)
- Draft and review the RFP, select the vendor, and award the contract (August, 2012)
- Perform the Needs Assessment (August – June, 2013)
    - Develop questionnaires
    - Perform two intercept studies
    - Traffic/process flow analysis
    - Material market analysis
    - Gap analysis
- Options Development (April – November, 2013)
    - Identify and prioritize possible solutions
    - Develop conceptual details
    - Ranking & option refinement
    - Associated policy review
    - Final ranking/recommendations
- Presentation to Metro Council
    - December 26, 2013

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Assessment Team Members, Roles, & Responsibilities

A team that will manage the needs assessment project must be defined, formed, and empowered.

Budget

A budget for the needs assessment project needs to be set and approved.

Selection of Needs Assessment Vendor

The assessment team, as part of the RFP drafting process, must decide the criteria on which the needs assessment vendor will be selected.

APPENDIX A
List of MSS Performance Issues

#	PRIORITY	ISSUE	SPEAK WITH?
1	Urgent	Space constrained (storage, queuing)	Commercial haulers Other cities/other systems w/satellites Self-haulers
2	High	Can't offer every service customers want with current layout (e.g., commercial organics recovery)	Users of facility Local governments Regulators who are cleaning up illegal dump sites Central and private customers (ECR)
3	High	Maximizing material recovery can't be accommodated	Transfer station operators End market representatives
4	Medium	No ability to quickly drop off recycling without going through scale house and entering facility	Other facilities that have had a self-haul problem (and how their solutions have worked) Self-haul customer
5	Low	Need more space to generate LEED recovery reports by load (waste characterization; spot weights and measure studies)	LEED folks Other operators
6	Low	Fraudulent out-of-area drop activity may be encouraged by lack of service cost and/or convenience	Regulators
7	Medium	Not enough emphasis on reuse (encourage reuse at the site)	Markets Contractors Rebuilding center West Vancouver Lane County
8	Medium	Safety concerns because of the unsignalized intersection	Commercial haulers (who use bypass lane) Oregon City (how they decide when back gate is a safety issue)
9	High	Concerns about facility in/out traffic flow	Customers Emergency responders
10	High	On-site transportation safety (e.g., trailer movement)	Penny Operator Customers Transporters
11	Medium	Inability to pick the wet waste	Operators
12	Low	General attitude that recycling is "free" affects consumer behavior	
13	Low	Generational thinking ("Grandpa went to the dump, so I have to.")	Survey
14	Medium	Facility not properly marketed	Competitors

#	PRIORITY	ISSUE	SPEAK WITH?
15	Medium	Private facilities have competitive advantage compared to MSS (they won't take self-haul customers)	1. Doug Anderson
16	High	2019 disposal contract expiration-could it bankrupt MSS	1. Doug Anderson
17	Low	Impact of rising fuel costs vis-à-vis usage patterns	1. Bill Stein
18	High	Impacts of development in surrounding area (town center developments, Max Green Line)	1. OR City (Tony Kunkel) 2. County 3. County Land Use Transportation Planners 4. ODOT 5. John Williams 6. Megan Gibb 7. Fred Bruening
19	Urgent	How to improve material recovery now that it's become a primary activity (and who are we recovering for?)	1. Mapcore

APPENDIX B
Management Plan Timeline