

Meeting minutes



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Meeting: Solid Waste Alternatives Advisory Committee (SWAAC)
Date/time: 10:00 a.m.-noon, Wednesday, September 14, 2016
Place: Metro Council Chambers

Members in Attendance:

Reba Crocker, City of Milwaukie
Paul Downey, City of Forest Grove
Peter Brandom, City of Hillsboro
Audrey O'Brien, Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality
Adrienne Welsh, Recycling Advocates
Bruce Walker, City of Portland
Rick Winterhalter, Clackamas County
Keith Ristau, Far West Recycling
Theresa Koppang, Washington County
Matt Korot, Metro
Paul Ehinger, Metro

Members Absent:

Alando Simpson, City of Roses Disposal & Recycling
Mike Leichner, Pride Disposal
Mark Ottenad, City of Wilsonville

Presenters:

Jennifer Erickson, Metro
Dan Blue, Metro
Bruce Walker, City of Portland

1. Call to Order and Declaration of a Quorum

Matt Korot welcomed the Committee members and attendees and asked the members to introduce themselves.

2. Comments from the Chair and SWACC Members

Mr. Korot welcomed new member Peter Brandom of the City of Hillsboro, who had been unable to attend the first meeting of his term.

3. Consideration of SWAAC Minutes from July 13, 2016

SWAAC members approved the minutes of the July 13, 2016 meeting.

4. Solid Waste Roadmap: Food Scraps Processing Capacity

Mr. Korot introduced this agenda item by saying that it is intended to help staff prepare for an Oct. 25, 2016 work session discussion with the Metro Council. Staff will share SWAAC members' input with Council. He noted that Jennifer Erickson and he would be discussing this work with the Metro Policy Advisory Committee on Oct. 12, 2016.

Ms. Erickson started her presentation by providing context for why the region has prioritized the recovery of wasted food, noting that food is the largest component of what the region discards as garbage and that there are significant environmental benefits from recovering it versus disposing in a landfill. She also emphasized that the region's work on recovery supplements other work focused on reducing food waste in the first place and directing edible food to feeding hungry people.

Ms. Erickson noted that the region's work on food scraps recovery is not new: the region has been working on it for over 20 years. The current work is intended to help ensure that the region has a sustainable food scrap recovery system that generates high quality material, has an adequate transfer system and enough stable processing capacity to allow growth in the collection of food scraps over time.

At the Metro Council's direction, staff has developed options for developing a greater supply of commercial food scraps. Ms. Erickson walked through these options, which Council will discuss at the Oct. 25, 2016 meeting:

Generator Action Options

Option A:

- Require certain categories of food-generating businesses to have food scrap collection service in place. The requirement would start with the largest generators and phase in over 3-5 years.
- Local jurisdictions would be required to establish a mandatory program of their design and ensure the provision of collection services.
- This option is projected to recover an additional 14,500-70,000 tons of food scraps per year, with quantities growing as new categories of businesses are included.

Option B:

- Similar to A, with the addition of Metro adopting a regional disposal ban effective in 2022. A disposal ban, monitoring and enforcement would occur at the point of disposal (transfer station or landfill), with limits set on the amount of food scraps allowed in a load.
- Option B could recover up to an additional 70,000 tons annually after the ban is in place.

Option C:

- Under this scenario, businesses would not be required to have service, but haulers would provide it upon request. Local governments would require that haulers provide collection to those businesses which choose to participate.
- This option does not allow for estimation of additional tons recovered.

Option D:

- Similar to Option C, with businesses initially having the option to participate, but adds a disposal ban in 2022.
- No estimate of additional tons recovered prior to the ban; up to 70,000 tons after the ban is in place.

Financial Incentive Options

Ms. Erickson said that the Metro Council is also interested in discussing options for using financial incentives to drive participation. Staff identified the following options:

Option 1:

- Under this model, local jurisdictions would establish food scrap collection rates that are significantly lower than regular garbage rates.

Currently, the cities of Beaverton and Gresham offer such reductions, and both have found that it's an ineffective method for increasing business participation.

Option 2:

- Metro could set the tip fee for food scraps at its transfer stations at an artificially low rate. The low tip fee would flow through to collection rate-setting.
- The costs not recovered through the tip fee would need to be recovered through the garbage tip fee.

Option 3:

- Local government would spread the costs of food scraps collection services across all commercial sector solid waste customers.

Most mandated food scraps collection programs in North America combine generator actions with financial incentives. These types of combinations are possible options for the Metro region, as well.

Ms. Erickson continued by saying that in addition to collecting the estimated 50,000 tons of food scraps annually that are needed for a sustainable program, aggregating the supply will be necessary in order to attract a processing facility to the region.

To accomplish this, flow could be directed solely to Metro's two transfer stations. Potential challenges with this approach are the amount of capacity at Metro South, and whether the west side of the region would be adequately served. Alternatively, Metro could work with the private transfer facilities in the region to determine how to aggregate the material so that it still gets to one processor. An influencing factor in considering these alternatives is where exactly the processing facility would be located.

Ms. Erickson said that the third part of the work that will be discussed with Council is, after getting more material into the system and figuring out how to aggregate it, contracting for processing services. Metro has taken the first step in that process by issuing a request for qualifications for processing services and pre-qualifying nine potential processors to serve the region. If Metro chooses to go forward with procurement, only those nine pre-qualified entities could respond.

In closing her presentation, Ms. Erickson shared results of stakeholder feedback from some businesses in suburban communities in the region. 90% of respondents were not opposed to a mandatory program, and 45% were in favor, mostly because of the environmental benefits. 30% had some concerns, mostly around costs and the availability of assistance to train employees, but were not opposed. Metro staff also consulted with industry organizations: the Northwest Food Processors, Oregon Grocery Association and the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association.

Discussion and Questions

Theresa Koppang asked how many businesses would be affected in each proposed implementation tier?

Ms. Erickson replied:

Group 1 – 841

Group 2 – 1,276 additional

Group 3 – 537 additional

She noted that the numbers include all businesses that would be required to participate. This includes over 1,000 businesses that already participate.

Peter Brandom commented that transfer of collected food scraps will be a big challenge, particularly in western Washington County. Costs to Hillsboro businesses would be high if food scraps had to be delivered to a distant Metro transfer station. Paul Downey and Ms. Koppang echoed this sentiment. Bruce Walker also concurred and noted that Metro has the ability to drive the process to get adequate transfer services.

Ms. Erickson conveyed that Metro shares this concern, adding that how to address west side transfer gaps can't really be determined until a location for the processing facility has been determined.

Mr. Walker added that the City of Portland has a mandatory collection program on the books, but hasn't yet required businesses to comply. He's in support of generator requirements.

Mr. Downey addressed processing: Will there be a ramp-up, or will they need all the tons at once?

There will be some room for a ramp-up, Ms. Erickson responded, but anaerobic digestion facilities, for example, will need a set minimum to begin operations.

Mr. Brandom noted that it just won't be possible for some businesses to participate, particularly due to space constraints, and that there needs to be the ability to grant exemptions. Ms. Erickson concurred.

Rick Winterhalter cautioned that pricing must be looked at closely. His jurisdiction has been subsidizing larger customers for many years. Addressing the embedded subsidy for food scrap generators is important.

Is aggregation simply flow control, Mr. Brandom asked? Mr. Korot replied that the goal is getting the necessary tons to one processor. The instrument used might be to direct material to only Metro facilities, but that may not be the best method to serve the entire region.

Mr. Walker asked how much food is being direct hauled to farms and do we really know that it's going to the higher use of feeding animals or is it a cheap disposal option?

Audrey O'Brien answered that the DEQ is evaluating the agricultural exclusion that allows such uses of food scraps. There is no requirement for DEQ review and approval of such uses. DEQ is working

with the Department of Agriculture to better determine how to ensure appropriate on-farm uses of commercial food scraps.

Mr. Brandom asked that Metro reach out to large generators in Hillsboro to get their input directly. He offered to help facilitate those conversations.

Mr. Walker would like to see a more directive approach, but is mindful of the challenges that other jurisdictions have. He noted also that he hasn't heard opposition by SWAAC members to aggregating flow and directing material to a particular facility, and he believes that it would be helpful for the Metro Council to give strong direction on that.

Mr. Winterhalter emphasized that transfer will be critical to system success and that the entire system should be used; private facilities should be required to accept food scraps and to deliver them to a single processor.

5. Update: SWAAC Subcommittee on Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and Conversion Technology Facility (CT) Regulatory Changes

Mr. Walker and Dan Blue reported on the (presumably) final meeting of this subcommittee. They recounted that at the July SWAAC meeting, Mr. Walker reported that substantial progress had been made regarding oversight of handling source-separated recyclables at regional MRFs (Material Recovery Facilities). That progress has continued.

The subcommittee reviewed feedback it received regarding recommendations for Conversion Technology facilities, and were able to further refine those recommendations as follows:

1. Require a franchise for CT facilities that receive putrescible waste.
2. Require a license for those receiving only non-putrescible waste.
3. Insert a definition into Metro Code that mirrors the State's definition of CTs.
4. Allow exemption from regulation for CTs that receive feedstocks that have already been extracted from mixed solid waste and prepared for interlocation into an industrial / manufacturing process.

These recommendations (along with recommendations previously agreed upon for regulating source-separate MRFs) are being finalized in a memo that will be provided to the full SWAAC before the October meeting.

6. Citizen Communications to SWAAC Agenda Items

Paul Woods of SORT BioEnergy commented that he appreciates staff's work on the food project. He offered that the perspective of a developer or investor would be that the higher the risk, the higher the rate of return needed. His firm could build a facility able to take 20,000 tons per year, but it may not prove to be economical to ratepayers. He added that the definition of a ton needs to be integrated into discussions. How much waste that is not-food will be allowed in loads? A cleaner stream reduces risks to the system.

7. Preview of the Next SWAAC Meeting Agenda, Final Comments

Mr. Korot announced that Oct. 12, 2016 SWAAC meeting will include discussion of the recommendations from the MRF/CT Subcommittee. Other topics are still to be determined.

Related to Mr. Woods comments, Mr. Walker commended Paul Ehinger and Recology for good work on contamination protocols at Metro Central, including notification of Portland staff so that the City can follow-up with businesses with contaminated loads.

Next meeting:

Wednesday, Oct. 12, 2016

10 a.m. – Noon

Metro Council Chambers

MEETING TOPIC

FROM

DATE