



# Meeting minutes

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting  
Date: Thursday, August 20, 2020  
Time: 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.  
Place: Zoom meeting  
Purpose: *The purpose of the Regional Waste Advisory Committee is to provide input on certain policies, programs, and projects that implement actions in the 2030 Regional Waste Plan, as well as to provide input on certain legislative and administrative actions that the Metro Council or Chief Operating Officer will consider related to implementation of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan.*

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## **Members in Attendance:**

Roy Brower, Metro  
Joe Buck, Small business owner  
Sharetta Butcher, North by Northeast Community Health Center (NxNE)  
Marilou Carrera, Portland Resident  
Thomas Egleston, Washington County  
Alondra Flores Aviña, Student  
Jill Kolek, City of Portland  
Shannon Martin, City of Gresham  
Christa McDermott, Community Environmental Services, PSU (PSU)  
Audrey O'Brien, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Eben Polk, Clackamas County  
Jenny Slepian, City of Lake Oswego  
Beth Vargas Duncan, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association (ORRA)

## **1. CALL TO ORDER & MEETING OVERVIEW**

Roy Brower (Metro) brought the virtual meeting to order at 8:01 am.

## **2. CONSIDERATION OF RWAC MINUTES FOR July 16, 2020**

Christa McDermott (PSU) and Eben Polk (Clackamas County) each had edits. For this reason, Mr. Brower postponed approving the meeting minutes until the September meeting once the changes were made.

## **3. REGIONAL WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK TO DATE**

Marta McGuire (Metro) presented to the committee a review of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan (RWP) direction and progress to date. She broke down the plan's elements: values, principles, vision, goals, indications, and action. She shared that the values and the vision of the plan outline overarching direction to ensure that the plan is aligned with Metro Council's desired outcomes. The principles provide a guide for equity considerations for the plan implementation. The largest component of the RWP is the goals and actions. There are five goal areas: Shared Prosperity, Product Design and Manufacturing, Product Consumption and Use, Product End-of-Life Management and Disaster Resilience.

Ms. McGuire outlined the goal areas and which committee discussions to date relate to those goal areas (see table below).

Goal areas	Committee discussions to date	Future committee topics
<b>Shared Prosperity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to RID Patrol and Workforce Transition Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RID Workforce Transition Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Youth leadership partnership programs</li> </ul>
<b>Product Design and Manufacturing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to product stewardship &amp; Metro's role in policy development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metro's 20-21 legislative agenda</li> </ul>
<b>Product Consumption and Use</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental promoters programs</li> <li>• School based education programs</li> </ul>
<b>Product End-of-Life Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility Siting and Investments</li> <li>• Business Food Waste Requirement</li> <li>• Regional Service Standards</li> <li>• Contamination Study</li> <li>• Statewide Recycling System Modernization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility Siting and Investments</li> <li>• Regional Service Standards</li> <li>• Statewide Recycling System Modernization</li> <li>• Material Recovery Facility performance standards</li> </ul>
<b>Disaster Resilience</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to COVID in operations</li> <li>• Disaster debris management</li> </ul>

Ms. McGuire shared that Metro does use key indicators and goal indicators for measuring progress. Metro serves as the lead for reporting on these indicators as well as an annual progress report.

Thomas Egleston (Washington County) asked for clarity on the committee's role with regard to engaging with topics and RWP work.

Ms. McGuire shared that the purpose of the committee is to provide input and guidance on the implementation of the RWP. Types of items that will come to the committee will generally be informational or advisory. In the working agreements, the committee has flexibility around decision-making items where committee may be making a recommendation which will be shared with Metro Council.

Ms. McDermott asked how the guidance and input from the committee thus far has been taken into account or incorporated thus far into the RWP work being done.

Ms. McGuire shared that at this point, none of the items that have come to the Regional Waste Advisory Committee have gone to Metro Council yet. At the moment, most items that have come to the committee have been to provide input to Metro staff. Ms. McGuire shared that during the second half of the meeting, the committee will have an opportunity to review the working agreements and consider a closed feedback loop specific to how topics come before the committee and how Metro staff can report back after input is given or have the committee engage in any decision-making.

Mr. Brower reminded the committee that they are not the only committee weighing in on some of these issues. Metro has the Committee on Racial Equity, the Metro Policy Advisory Committee, etc. He noted that Metro staff will work to ensure that moving forward, Metro staff communicate back to the committee when and how the committee decisions are impacting the work of the RWP.

Ms. McGuire shared a concept document: Regional Waste Plan engagement summary, for the committee to consider using as a tool and reference guide moving forward. The other document shares the committee discussions to-date and a schedule of topics for the coming months. It also outlines which goals within the RWP relate to any given topic and if the topic was informational, advisory, or if a decision related to the topic is being requested.

Beth Vargas Duncan (ORRA) shared that she likes the first draft document shared by Ms. McGuire. She shared feedback on possible additions to the table such as updates on where each item is at, what other groups or committees have engaged on the topic, etc.

Mr. Polk noted that the Regional Waste Advisory Committee website references input a lot when talking about committee purpose. He noted that the committee may need some centering on the committee's role. The committee has referenced consensus and taking votes in the working agreements which implies more than just providing reactions to topics. It implies that the committee may want a more formal structure surrounding decision making than what is outlined on the committee website.

#### **4. COMMITTEE WORKING AGREEMENTS**

Molly Chidsey (Metro) led the facilitation of the conversation around revisiting the committee's working agreements. She noted that the purpose of the conversation today was to get clarity on how Metro can support expectations laid out in the working agreements. She noted that Metro heard from several committee members over the past few months as Metro was looking for feedback on how Metro can make the committee more effective, particularly as the committee is still relatively new. Feedback from the committee highlighted a few areas where Metro could improve specific to the working agreements. A few of the points that were heard: committee members are feeling somewhat ungrounded in their role as a committee, wanting a better understanding on how the committee topics relate to the RWP, and that the committee is feeling like they need to react to topics being presented or so than providing meaningful input. Ms. Chidsey shared that this feedback has been important and that Metro wants to work on addressing these concerns with the committee.

Ms. Chidsey then referred to the RWAC Working Agreements (which the committee approved at the January 2020 meeting). She highlighted a few sections within the working agreements specific to expectations for Metro staff:

1. When providing context for committee discussions, do include:
  - a. Break down complex concepts, avoid jargon and expand acronyms (1c)
  - b. Identify decision-makers responsible for changes being pursued and options for how the committee can influence decision-making. (1h)
2. When building agendas for committee meetings:
  - a. Be clear about what Metro seeks from the committee on each agenda item (2b)
  - b. Work with the committee to develop an annual committee meeting calendar with topics and upcoming Council decisions noted (2f)
3. Tie topics being discussed to the goals of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan and other Metro plans to advance racial equity.

She checked in with the committee to make sure these are the main agreements that committee has highlighted as needs that aren't being met.

Mr. Egleston shared that item 1h in the agreements is definitely an item that needs clarity: identify decision-makers responsible for changes being pursued and options for how the committee can influence decision-making. He noted that especially the local government representatives already have opportunities to allow their perspectives to be heard. He shared that he has heard from

committee community members that content is dense material and uses a lot of industry jargon which puts local government and industry representatives at an unfair advantage. How can this committee collectively make recommendations to Metro Council and what should that look like?

Ms. Chidsey noted that committee decision making was also a topic that they planned to discuss today.

Jill Kolek (City of Portland) noted that there is a power dynamic that should be considered. She referenced the rates conversation from the July meeting where government and industry voices were heard but community member voices were not as present for that topic.

Ms. McDermott shared that as a community member, she appreciated this input coming from the government committee members. She acknowledged that government and industry folks come into the conversation with a lot more knowledge than community members who aren't engaging in this content every day. Community members are eager to contribute. But referencing the rates topic, she noted that this was new information to community members where it may not have been new to government and industry folks. More discussion would have probably been more helpful.

Beth Vargas Duncan agreed with all the previous comments from committee members and felt some of these issues needed to be fixed as soon as possible. She referenced section 1f in the working agreements: historical context. She noted that the topics are often large and complex and the content can be challenging for anyone not engaging in the material consistently. She felt it is vital that there be regular updates on critical pieces of information such as rates (she thought rates should be discussed at every meeting, among others).

Ms. Chidsey encouraged committee to email Casey Mellnik with items and suggestions for anything the committee feels has been missing.

Jenny Slepian (City of Lake Oswego) wanted to know what the vision was for the committee knowing that the committee makeup would be so varied in terms of immersion in the solid waste system.

Ms. McGuire noted that the point of increasing representation on the Regional Waste Advisory Committee to include more community members was to bring that voice into the decision-making process. She noted that more work needs to be done to make the work inclusive and ensure that community members have the right level of knowledge and feel equipped and prepared to make informed decisions and give input. Ms. McGuire shared that the committee could consider bringing advisory items to the committee in a two part process: first would be informational and the second would be advisory/decision making. Between that time, staff could engage with community members and answer questions on the topic. Also that Metro can look at opportunities to have staff translate documents that are dense with industry and legal jargon to make them accessible. Ms. McGuire also reintroduced the option to do breakout sessions which would allow for smaller group discussions. She noted that some people feel better and more able to share in smaller groups.

Mr. Brower shared that when the Regional Waste Advisory Committee was formed, the RWP had just been adopted by the Metro Council. Initially, Mr. Brower envisioned the committee as a support for launching the new efforts within the plan. Specific to the local government representation, he saw this committee as an opportunity for local government to engage with community members as the plan was being implemented. He emphasized the importance of the government and industry representatives to hear from community on the topics at hand and the trajectory of the work. Mr. Brower noted that Metro continues to face more budget cuts, possible

staff cuts, cuts to programs and services. He noted that Metro will most likely be coming back to the committee to share where some of those cuts may happen and what some of the tradeoffs might be. Mr. Brower noted that Metro did at one point have a rate review committee which had many conflicting perspectives. He shared that not much has changed since the July meeting on Metro's possible proposal for rate increases. He shared that he in his perspective, he did not want the committee to get too centered on rates.

Audrey O'Brien (DEQ) appreciated Metro's efforts to broaden representation on this workgroup. She served on the committee that came before the Regional Waste Advisory Committee. She shared that it is challenging to start something new like this current committee. She commended Metro for this check in to ensure the committee and Metro are on track and that things are working well. She has used some of the experiences from this committee and brought them back to her work at DEQ. She emphasized the importance of this committee working on how they can bring their perspective to the Metro Council.

Ms. Chidsey engaged the committee in conversation utilizing a virtual whiteboard. Below are the notes from the conversation. Ms. Chidsey started by sharing some of the feedback/suggestions from the committee:

1. Staff should identify what feedback they are seeking from the committee and be as specific as possible, rather than asking general questions like "So.... What do you think?" Metro can also work with the committee to identify what type of decision-making process from the working agreements that is wanted to use for each decision (consensus, vote, etc.).
2. Allow more time during meetings for supported committee discussions, less listening to staff presentations.
3. Staff should make it a practice to circle back with the committee about how committee input influenced the outcome of what was discussed.
4. Try out the CORE practice: For items that require committee input or a vote of support, use two meetings to go through the topic. Use the first meeting to present the information and options, use the following meeting for committee discussion and decision-making.

Sharetta Butcher (NxNE) provided input on where Metro can improve on commitments in the working agreements. She highlighted the importance of community voices being heard. She supported small group discussions, have time to connect with a topic, and understand the pros and cons of the topic at hand. She supported the idea of a two part conversation (topics spanning a few meetings) to give sufficient time to any given topic.

Ms. Chidsey asked Ms. Butcher to elaborate on some of her thoughts on reaching out to community in greater Portland.

Alondra Flores Aviña (Student) agreed that small group conversations would be helpful. She like the idea of topics spanning a few meetings to give time to digest materials and content. She asked if community members should be trying to connect with the communities they feel they represent.

Ms. McGuire expressed that it is not a formal responsibility but it is up to the community members. The community engagement responsibility falls to Metro as the RWP is implemented. It is up to community members on the committee if they feel compelled to engage their communities.

Ms. Chidsey also reintroduced the possibility of forming sub-committees as an option for the future. She asked what folks wanted to see when they reference smaller group conversations.

Ms. Sharetta Butcher supported the idea of breakout sessions.

Ms. Chidsey shared that there were options for community members such as pre-meetings or access to conversations with project managers, background sessions, etc. She asked the committee what they thought would be helpful.

Ms. Sharetta Butcher was open to mini-sessions and that they could be important to get some of the pro/con reasons for topics which may not come to light in the larger group.

Marilou Carrera (Portland resident) appreciates processing in small groups. It is not very effective to process in the moment with a large group. Mini-sessions could be helpful. If materials are not too dense or full of jargon, she will read items in advance. There should be touch points with industry folks. She also emphasized the importance of clarifying decision-making practices and that process. Also, are there consequences attached to committee comments, which are public.

Ms. Chidsey noted that one point Metro is open to do is sharing out the impact of the committee input or decisions and if that changed/didn't change elements of the work and how that input was used or not used.

Joe Buck (Small business owner) noted that small groups would be helpful. Also with regard to background information, it would be helpful to have background information in advance. If background materials can be sent in advance, the meetings can be more focused on discussion. He also noted that it would be helpful to have clarity on what topics have already been vetted. For example, facility siting: has Metro decided to build new facilities, has a property already been chosen, what topics are already on an implementation path etc. it will help the committee know their role on specific topics and be clear what specific components of the work require input. If there is no decision being requested, Metro staff should be clear on that.

Ms. McDermott introduced the idea of committee homework. There is responsibility on both Metro and the community. She acknowledged that there are time limitations but proposed that the committee write a few notes/feedback/questions ahead of the meeting. This could be a few sentences from each community member which could help guide conversation. She also liked the idea of calling on committee members and make space for quieter members.

Ms. Chidsey opened the conversation to the rest on the committee.

Mr. Egleston noted that it is possible that the committee has too many local government representatives which may dominate some of the conversations. He referenced the power dynamic and that if the committee had more community members, there could be better representation.

Ms. McGuire noted that there was a process for the committee development which included public comment. Metro does see the value in having the deliberation between community members and local government and having those views come together. It is helpful to have these views come out together. There may be opportunities to explore some of the working groups that currently exist (like the local government solid waste directors) in the future and that they may take a different form.

Ms. Kolek commended Marilou Carrera on bringing her concerns and perspectives to the committee which sparked today's discussion. Ms. Chidsey on the facilitation of the meeting and making space for community members. She sees the importance of both local government, industry, and community members being represented on the committee for robust discussion.

Shannon Martin (City of Gresham) shared that local government values the input from the community members on the committee. He supports efforts to ensure those voices are heard. He

appreciates the efforts from Metro to change the committee makeup and support efforts to make all voices heard.

Ms. Chidsey shared out next steps in this process. She felt that conversation today was rich and appreciated everyone's participation. She noted a few key things that were heard:

1. Focus on prioritizing community members of the committee in discussions
2. Work with community members on possible pre-work or pre-meetings
3. Look at options for small group discussion or breakouts
4. Try out the concept of two-meetings for topics to allow space to process materials.
5. Look at pre-reading or preparing the committee for discussion.

Ms. McGuire added that it would be good to have a quarterly check in to make sure that Metro and the committee are on track.

Mr. Brower closed out the meeting. He acknowledged that there may be lingering issues and that Metro is happy to continue engaging in discussion.

**MEETING AJOURNED at 9:55 a.m.**

**Next meeting**

September 17, 2020 8:00 am – 10:00 am (virtual meeting)