



# Meeting minutes

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting  
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021  
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 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  
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 8:33 am and previewed the agenda.

## **2. METRO WEST PROPERTY ACQUISITION UPDATE**

Dan Blue (Metro) updated the committee that on February 4th, Metro Council heard a presentation from Roy Brower, Gloria Pinzon and three community members: Milka Mendez, resident of Forest Grove and member of the Community Advisory Group for the Future West project, Rob Drake, City Manager for the City of Cornelius and Mariana Valenzuela, Director of Community Partnerships & Civic Engagement at Centro Cultural. Metro Council voted unanimously to acquire the Cornelius property. Metro will be closing on the property in early March and most likely renewing the lease for the farmer for at least a year. Staff plan to continue to stay engaged with the Community Advisory Group. The focus will now be centered on the Future South property acquisition.

Thomas Egleston (Washington County) asked if there is any information on the timeline and when the next decision will be made on whether the site will be built out.

Mr. Blue responded that staff are hoping to go back to Metro Council later in 2021 to discuss broader systems scenarios.

Mr. Brower agreed and shared that the work being done with system-wide planning for facilities and future needs that will inform how quickly Metro moves ahead with the Cornelius project. The estimated time frame for that is late 2021 or early 2022.

### 3. FUTURE METRO SOUTH RECYCLING AND TRANSFER CENTER: JENNIFER STREET

Estee Segal (Metro) introduced the topic and noted that the focus for this topic before the committee is on engagement and the plans for talking to community about the proposed site at Jennifer Street in Clackamas County. Ms. Segal briefly reviewed the site which was shared with the committee at last month's committee meeting. This site ranked 6 out of 160 sites based on a variety of siting criteria. Metro signed a purchase and sale agreement with the property owners in November 2020 with nine months to complete due diligence, investigation and evaluation. This work will need to go before the Metro Council in July to make a final decision whether or not to purchase the property. Staff are now scoping geotechnical analysis and more investigation on the stability of the soil. There will also be a consultant looking at the historic use of the site and surrounding area for cultural and archeological history. Ms. Segal noted that site specific engagement has started and that staff presented to the Clackamas County Refuse Association, the Portland Indian Round Table, so far. They have plans to present to the Native American Community Advisory Council, the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners, and the Oregon City Board in late February and early March.

Mr. Polk asked the committee's community members if they had any experience using the Metro South Transfer Station.

Most expressed that they do not have experience using the transfer station, but a few were able to participate in a tour of the facility.

Mr. Polk shared that Metro staff have heard Clackamas County's take so far on this work and that the county appreciates that Metro has been willing to keep options open as far as which services move, maybe all services, maybe some. Mr. Polk emphasized the convenience of the existing site as something that needs to be paid more attention to.

Mr. Brower noted that the key question right now is whether to buy or not to buy the property with the understanding that eventually it could be a full service, commercial self-haul facility with other public amenities. But the question on the table for now is: is there any reason not to move forward with this particular site.

Shannon Martin (City of Gresham) recalled that Metro spent a lot of time evaluating Metro South in the past with the number of consultants looking at options for that site with a number of designs proposed to Metro. He was curious to know if those designs that were proposed to Metro just didn't meet the needs of all of the services that are needed at that site because of space constraints. And why now Metro is deciding to move to another site.

Mr. Brower responded that the biggest challenge was the increased self-haul traffic on the current Metro South site would make it impossible to really do anything more at that site. As far as a construction project, if Metro were to go in and do a construction project to redo Metro South, the site would have to close for a couple of years. There is still an open question about which services would move and when. And so that's still up for consideration and discussion.

Mr. Blue shared a bit about the traffic flow currently at Metro South. There are **CORRECTION FOR ACCURACY: CHANGE 230,000 to 250,000** customers at Metro South, moving through a highly constrained space. Year-over-year customer counts are up 42% at both Metro South and Central for the month of January 2021.

Ms. Segal shared that staff are putting together a business case for Metro South which should be completed in April which summarizes all of the assessments that have been done over the years in a brief and concise format. That business case will summarize what's been looked at already and why Metro is moving in the current direction. Ms. Segal noted that Metro and Clackamas County staff, **CORRECTION (ADD): with help from HDR in 2019**, have looked at a very high level at the possibility of moving commercial off the site and redoing the existing Metro South station for self-haul and

looked at the cost differences between what it would take to redo our current site for just self-haul, and how to change access points to make that functional to meet 2030 Regional Waste Plan goals. It revealed that it would be like building two new facilities in two separate locations, with a pretty high price tag to do both. There are so many different ways to parse this work out and look at what services move or stay. A lot of it is still to be determined based on the property that gets purchased and what **services** make sense at any given site.

Jenny Slepian was curious if any of the studies have looked at the geographical area that draws customers to Metro South. Knowing that over the past couple of years, the region has lost other recycling facilities that people in Clackamas County or in South Washington County were using, like the Far West facilities, for example and that all those people are going to Metro South, have any of the studies looked at the geographical area that people are coming from to use the transfer station? She shared that she is definitely in support of having a bigger site, but also in support of offering some services **still at** the existing Metro South. Because if a bigger site is built, how long until this one has the same problems like the current Metro South.

Ms. Segal noted that the solid waste facilities system-wide planning, **CORRECTION (ADD): now getting underway**, will hopefully help make sense of what the needs are in different parts of the region, what is public, what private services are available, etc.

Mr. Blue shared that Metro did an intercept survey within the last few years to track zip codes for customers at both Metro South and Central, **CORRECTION (ADD): so Metro does have this information**.

Mr. Egleston asked for Eben Polk to share a little bit about his perspective on this work since it is in the county where he works and that Oregon City is the host community currently.

Mr. Brower noted that Metro has heard a bit of a mixed message from Oregon City. Some of the city's elected officials have indicated that that Metro South is really not part of the future of Oregon City and have been encouraging us to find an alternative location. One particular elected official was recently recalled, and so Metro is presenting back to the Oregon City Council to get more input on where they're at today. Mr. Brower noted what he sees as the three high-level questions at this juncture:

1. Should Metro buy the new land on Jennifer Street?
2. What should move to the new site and in what order?
3. What should happen to the old/original Metro South?

Mr. Polk agreed that Oregon City has expressed mixed messages. The Clackamas County Board will have a chance to discuss this later in February. Mr. Polk shared that the reason why the site is so popular is not because things work great on site. From the perspective of many customers, it is popular because it's so accessible, you could not find a better location for a self-haul facility in Clackamas County. It is at the nexus of six different state highways and major roads. So any site is probably going to be a downgrade in terms of perceived accessibility from the Clackamas County user community. With respect to the Clackamas industrial area, the input has been that **being** further off the main routes **CORRECTION (ADD): in the industrial area could be more compatible for commercial hauling**. With respect to the Jennifer Street site, self-haul is like a retail type of experience and that area is not really designed for that kind of traffic or experience. That said, there may be traffic studies and other things that could help to inform the situation. It was appreciated that Metro has been willing to take another look with the consultant, HDR, at whether or not the existing location could be retrofitted for self-haul. Mr. Polk expressed interest in exploring other creative lower cost solutions for **CORRECTION (ADD): the current** Metro South to maintain self-haul there.

Sharetta Butcher (NxNE) asked how much Metro has heard from community and that the property purchase is seeming a bit rushed. She expressed that it is important to ensure that the voice of community needs to be heard on this project.

Mr. Blue noted that the next portion of the presentation to the committee would go into the engagement work. He also noted that Metro has essentially been looking for property for **CORRECTION (ADD): a new South facility for** about a decade. To the question of urgency, Metro has identified one property that may be a viable option at this point in time. There is a short timeframe due to the contract with the seller. Metro tried to get a longer period **CORRECTION (ADD): from the seller**, but negotiated **CORRECTION (ADD): the best that they could** and ended up with a nine month period to do the initial work. This is the first decision which is based on the urgency of addressing problems at the Metro South Station. If Metro doesn't have land, there can't even be a consideration about what may or may not move or what may or may not stay at the current location.

Beth Vargas Duncan asked about additional services that might be available at a new facility.

Mr. Blue listed a few different examples:

1. Commercial food waste processing
2. Other hard-to-recycle items
3. Increased recovery of materials for the landfill banned waste stream

Jill Kolek (City of Portland) asked for more information on the regional system-wide plan and how that aligns with this work and the community engagement pieces. She noted that it seems like that bigger plan is pretty critical to this process, and how we talk to the committee and decision making.

Mr. Brower noted that within the system-wide plan, Metro South is probably considered the top property to fix which is why Metro is proceeding down parallel tracks currently. The goal is to bring the system-wide planning work to the committee in the summer.

Gloria Pinzon (Metro) began her presentation on the engagement work for the Jennifer Street site. The discussion at the committee meeting will focus on:

1. Questions posed to Metro by the Community Advisory Group
2. The **CORRECTION (ADD): draft Community Considerations (criteria, lens)** to find a property

Ms. Pinzon also shared that staff would like hear suggestions from the committee about how Metro may prioritize audiences to reach for engagement. She also asked if the committee would be willing to write a letter to express their opinions about the property purchase.

Ms. Pinzon discussed the draft community lens which summarizes some of what has been heard from community members, discuss the process for audience prioritization. Ms. Pinzon asked if the committee's participation could include submitting a letter to the Metro Council. Metro staff are hoping to answer two main questions by August:

1. Is the location appropriate for building a new recycling and transfer center?
2. Should Metro purchase the property or not?

Some secondary objectives will be that Metro will have to speak about the specific services/possibilities on the project. However, staff are not ready to make any **CORRECTION (ADD): final** decisions about the services. Yet, it will be important to hear some of the desired community amenities and services that community members are interested in and would like to see Metro pursue and investigate at future phases.

Ms. Kolek asked if that is specific to that site or is it from the whole area. She could see the current site being a place where, because of the foot traffic and the accessibility, people could see it serving a certain purpose, whereas the industrial land is less accessible and she could see less of an interest in additional services being rendered there.

Ms. Pinzon responded that as far as the desired community amenities and services, Metro would be taking more of a general approach.

Audrey O'Brien noted that it appears that the location being considered has a lot of industry around it or commercial entities. She asked if there is a commercial or industrial association that Metro could reach out to as well. She also asked about neighborhood associations or associations representing the businesses in the community and possibly a watershed advisory group as the site is close to the Clackamas River.

Ms. Pinzon noted that Metro is investigating that currently and appreciated Ms. O'Brien's suggestions. She then shared a bit about the Community Advisory Group, the community lens that Metro will use to assess any sites being considered for purchase, the guiding principles of the community lens and community criteria for property evaluation (document attached at the end of minutes and on Metro website). Committee members read through the community criteria for selection. Ms. Pinzon noted that the criteria are still a draft and the Community Advisory Group has not **CORRECTION (ADD): yet** weighed in on this particular draft.

Mr. Martin was curious about the amenities piece and if that is coming from the community or the Metro staff, because he has seen that in both transfer station projects.

Ms. Pinzon responded that it is coming from the fact that Metro, when explaining the possibilities for the project, expressed and showed examples of how other modern stations have been built and incorporate **CORRECTION (CHANGE): community amenities**. And that's one of the things that people are very interested in, in the ongoing education, to reduce waste, for example, accessibility to families and youth and potential partnerships in the long term. So they're really thinking about how this might fit into their community in the long term. Possibilities were presented by Metro staff and the group said, yes, we want this and wanted to see it represented here.

Marilou Carrera (Portland resident) recalled a houseless community near the site and was curious if there was a conflict there and if that group was being engaged. She also wanted better understanding of how the criteria will be used in practice.

Ms. Pinzon responded that there is a veteran's shelter village – houseless veterans transitioning to stable housing and accessing services. Metro has reached out to Clackamas County about the project. The understanding is that that project is temporary, but Metro is operating as if it is permanent.

Ms. Segal noted that Metro has reached out and is planning to do some meetings with this group via Zoom. Specific to the criteria question, staff envision responding to questions for any site under consideration, explaining how staff see the site either fitting or not fitting with the criteria. So Metro envisions writing a brief report back to the Community Advisory Group and also sharing with groups like this one (RWAC) that responds to how the site meets or doesn't meet the community criteria. It would not necessarily knock a site out from further consideration, but it would report out on what the concerns are, and how Metro plans to mitigate those concerns.

Mr. Egleston asked about the criteria related to site size – seemed like there was contradictory information.

Mr. Blue shared that Metro started out searching for seven acre properties **CORRECTION (ADD): as a critical goal**. But one thing that staff learned from touring modern facilities is to acquire as much as you can for future growth. While Metro South is larger than seven acres, it's awkwardly shaped and it has real challenges in terms of traffic flow, and it was never designed to do the work that it is doing today. One could design a modern facility on seven acres, and manage traffic much more effectively than the current Metro South Station.

Ms. Segal added that the seven acres was related to only moving self-haul services. Ms. Segal's opinion is that it would be too small for full service.

Mr. Polk asked two questions: how did the racial equity analysis that was done for Metro South site selection area inform this part of the process, like the community criteria? And then a specific question around criteria number two, about the fact that the site is easily accessible to urban and rural customers by multiple modes of transportation. This is forcing Mr. Polk to question his assumptions about how transfer stations are expected to work. One doesn't normally think of walking and biking as being essential access modes for a transfer station, unlike other key services in our community.

Ms. Pinzon answered Mr. Polk's first question that the racial equity analysis is helping inform who needs to be prioritized in the engagement process and how many residences are near the property, to be thinking about potential impact, and how Metro wants to engage communities that might be most vulnerable. For the engagement for the Community Advisory Group, staff are very intentional about reaching out to folks with certain identities and encouraging certain folks to apply. To respond to Mr. Polk's second question, accessibility by different modes of transportation was something that is turning out to be important to at least a few of the members on the advisory group.

Ms. Pinzon transitioned to the questions section (attached with the draft community criteria doc at the end of the final minutes) which are meant to be answered in the future and address these for the community.

Audrey O'Brien (DEQ) suggested that Metro could communicate that **CORRECTION (CHANGE): Metro** will need DEQ solid waste permit for this site. And as part of that process, DEQ would consider an information meeting at the start of an application, site characterization is required, which would include evaluating the environmental impacts, economic feasibility and other criteria, such as have come up in this conversation. And land use compatibility is required to get a DEQ permit which might help to address the goal five questions. This is additional information Metro can provide as part of the permitting process that would be required for any kind of transfer station facility.

Ms. Carrera noted that criteria number five cites history as it relates to the surrounding land, which is related to Oregon goal five, but also it feels like there's a connection to one of the guiding principles around honor for the history of the original habitants, inhabitants of the land on tribal lands. She asked how that principle gets translated into some kind of implementation.

Ms. Pinzon acknowledged that this could be outlined a little more explicitly. She noted that people are curious to know if there are important cultural resources there that should be protected or incorporated into the planning and design of the project. Staff are starting conversations with First Nations. That is one of the questions staff could ask if they're interested in getting involved in this project in the long term.

Ms. Carrera expressed interest to see the results of the Cultural Resources Survey. She is particularly interested in what some of these questions and ideas actually mean in practice and operation.

Mr. Brower added that Metro is looking at land acknowledgement and more engagement with indigenous people and tribes in a more formal way across the board.

Alondra Flores Avina asked about the Community Neighbor agreement.

Ms. Pinzon answered that a community neighbor agreement would be required of Metro because they would be building a transfer station. It's required of any private companies or organizations that build transfer stations. It's an agreement that must be built in partnership with the neighboring community and with the host community. That would be a process that staff would get started on after a site is selected for purchase. It would be a long term process. Ms. Pinzon then shared information about Metro's priority audiences (outlined in the presentation slides). She also noted

that there is a tight timetable to reach these priority audiences before a decision is needed to purchase the property. She shared some of the groups they hope to reach: residents of the veteran's village, nearby neighboring businesses, urban indigenous people, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Red Lodge Transition Center, non-profit leaders, neighborhood associations, etc. She opened the conversation up for questions.

Mr. Martin asked how the public **CORRECTION (ADD): (customers)** feels if the site were to move to Jennifer Street. He also wondered how Metro and local governments will communicate and incorporate haulers into this conversation related to routes.

Mr. Egleston noted that considering how busy Metro South is currently, this could be a great audience to survey.

Mr. Brower shared that Metro has done some surveys and that Metro can bring some of that information back to the committee.

Ms. Segal noted that there is general information from surveys but nothing site specific for the Jennifer Street project under consideration.

Mr. Polk mentioned that the DHM consultant survey included around 300 users of Metro South who were invited to share their opinions. There were some interesting answers around what they value the most as far as changes and that includes adding new services was one of the top things. So maybe that survey and the survey results can be shared with this group.

Ms. Pinzon asked if the committee was willing/interested to write a letter as a committee body to the Metro Council on whether this property should be purchased.

Mr. Egleston shared that there are still questions and information missing to make a final decision. He noted that as a representative of Washington County, he wanted to defer more heavily to those who work/live/use the site in Clackamas County.

Ms. Segal responded that the intent would be to come back to RWAC in June and give an update on what Metro has heard from the various engagements and what has been discovered and have that time with the committee to pull together either a list of opinions or a letter.

Mr. Polk responded that this would be a great exercise – which the committee did not do with the West property acquisition.

Beth Vargas Duncan (ORRA) **CORRECTION (DELETE): she** echoed Mr. Egleston and Mr. Polk's comments that this is a good opportunity to give input, and that it wasn't done for the West project. She wanted to highlight the importance of discussing the cost.

Mr. Brower shared that the purchase price of this particular piece of property, like with the Cornelius property has already been factored into the rates. So the actual purchase will not impact the rates. But whatever Metro builds from a capital perspective, and however staff put the operation in place will have additional costs. That is one of the things that Metro is looking at both system wide and at both locations. Some of those questions will get answered down the road.

#### **4. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF ITEMS**

Committee meeting minutes for December 17, 2020 were approved by the committee.  
Committee meeting minutes for January 21, 2021 were approved by the committee.

**MEETING AJOURNED at 10:30 a.m.**

**Next meeting**

March 18, 2021 8:30 am – 10:30 am (virtual meeting)