

Metro

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Metro

Minutes

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

10:30 AM

**Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber,
<https://zoom.us/j/615079992> Webinar ID: 615 079 992 or
888-475-4499 (toll free)
<https://www.youtube.com/live/LwMlogEFIp8?feature=shared>**

Council work session

This meeting will be held electronically and in person at the Metro Regional Center Council Chamber.

You can join the meeting on your computer or other device by using this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/615079992> (Webinar ID: 615 079 992)

10:30 Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: 7 - Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal, Councilor Mary Nolan, Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Duncan Hwang, Christine Lewis, Lynn Peterson, and Ashton Simpson

Work Session Topics:

10:30 Business Food Waste System Overview

Presenter(s): Holly Stirnkorb (she/her), Principle Planner, Metro
Marta McGuire, Director WPES
Dena Hastings, Program Manager

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)
[Attachment 1](#)

Council President Peterson introduced Holly Stirnkorb (she/her), Principle Planner, Metro; Marta McGuire, Director WPES; and Dena Hastings, Program Manager to present the Business Food Waste System Overview.

Staff pulled up the Business Food Waste System Overview presentation to present to Council.

Presentation Summary:

The presenters provided an overview of the Business Food Waste System, which is centered on the collection and sustainable use or handling of compostable food waste. They discussed the options available to reduce waste as well as the regional outcomes and goals for the program. The presenters finished by covering the current status of the program and asked Council to extending the Commercial Food Waste Disposal Prohibition deadline to 2027.

Council Discussion:

Councilor Nolan asked what the benefit would be to extending the deadline and whether there is a form of recognition offered to the businesses that are currently complying with the food waste requirements.

The presenters replied that extending the deadline will give the government more time to collaborate with businesses and bring them into compliance. They also stated that there is currently no recognition for businesses who have complied before the deadline.

Councilor Nolan pointed out that moving the deadline without recognition could provide a disincentive for businesses to comply, as they may think the deadline is not that important.

The presenters replied that they appreciated Councilor Nolan's perspective and stated that they do provide an annual waiver for businesses that are unable to comply with the food waste mandate. There are also programs within counties and cities that recognize green businesses that are operating sustainably, although there is no region-wide recognition program.

Councilor Nolan followed up by asking whether the 44% compliance rate is based on the number of businesses or the amount of food waste in the region.

The presenters answered that it represents the total number of eligible businesses, and the actual food waste being sustainably processed is between 50% to 60%.

Councilor Nolan encouraged the presenters to look at the data by size and therefore by volume, which is more impactful from a climate and environmental perspective.

Councilor Hwang thanked the presenters for their engagement, then asked how the weight of food waste is reported.

The presenters clarified that the estimated the amount of waste is based on the amount of compost bins that businesses fill based on service level.

Councilor Hwang requested more information about why staff recommends moving the deadline two years away instead of one year.

The presenters replied that moving the deadline is based on the original phases of the system facilities plan. The first phase had a two-year delay due to the pandemic, so they want to extend this deadline to provide the same amount of transition time as intended in the initial plan.

Councilor Hwang raised additional concerns about moving the deadline due to the urgency of climate change.

The presenters responded that extending the deadline to some degree is important to allow staff to develop the appropriate codes and bring partners into alignment.

Councilor Hwang expressed his desire for a future work session where staff provides goals and milestones so that, if the extension is approved, there is not another extension later on.

Councilor Rosenthal asked whether staff has identified

public partners that could operate in the underserved east side of the region and how many plastic removal processors are needed regionally to handle the contamination issue.

The presenters stated that the system facilities plan includes potential sites for additional transfer stations and options for partnering with public facilities. Currently, there is only one de-packager in the region, but there are opportunities to add more.

Councilor Gonzalez spoke in support of the extension due to the effects of the pandemic. He wondered whether the staff has data to reflect the overall food waste of the region.

The presenters replied that they can reach back out to Council with specific data, but the estimate is around 21,000 tons for businesses currently meeting the requirements.

Councilor Gonzalez followed up with a question about what penalties exists for non-compliant businesses.

The presenters replied that local governments have individual enforcement strategies. This can include letters, technical assistance, and fines, depending on the city or county.

Councilor Gonzalez asked whether the requirements also apply to small business, such as food courts.

The presenters stated that it applies to any business that generates more than 250 pounds of food waste per week.

Councilor Gonzalez expressed his interest in learning more about the businesses that have succeeded and his hope for sharing positive narratives and impacts with the community.

The presenters responded with appreciation for Councilor Gonzalez's feedback and explained that they have been developing those narratives through videos and reports.

Councilor Gonzalez asked what the rate of contamination is like and what forms of education are being promoted.

The presenters replied that they analyzed the contamination levels before the requirements and found that it totaled 6%, which only reflected businesses participating voluntarily. They explained that the rate is currently higher because of a lack of investment from non-compliant business partners. However, they expect that the rate will drop significantly once the transfer stations acquire a food processor that removes packaging.

Councilor Lewis expressed her appreciation for the work of staff and the importance of food in creating a sustainable region. She supported the suggestion of Councilor Hwang to create benchmarks and incentives for the program. She asked two questions: 1) what kind of systems mapping is available for and investments and tracking resources in the region, and 2) in terms of defining commercial kitchens, is there a possibility to include schools in the initiative?

The presenters answered that the goal is to have diverse and redundant markets to maximize investment in the food waste system. They added that schools are not included in the plan for an equity reason, because school district food management programs are largely volunteer run.

Councilor Lewis stated her support for developing better educational materials for distribution at schools.

Seeing no further discussion, Council President Peterson moved on to the next item on the agenda.

11:15 2025 State Legislative Agenda

Presenter(s): Anneliese Koehler, Legislative Affairs Manager, Metro

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)
[Attachment 1](#)
[Attachment 2](#)
[Attachment 3](#)
[Attachment 4](#)
[Attachment 5](#)
[Attachment 6](#)
[Attachment 7](#)

Council President Peterson introduced Anneliese Koehler, Legislative Affairs Manager, Metro to present on the 2025 State Legislative Agenda.

Staff pulled up the 2025 State Legislative Agenda presentation to present to Council.

Presentation Summary:

Anneliese Koehler provided an overview of the statewide election results and ballot measures from the November 2024 election cycle. She characterized the election results as remaining very similar to the current makeup of the state legislature and made note of the two ballot measures that passed. Koehler then discussed the legislative priorities discussed by Council previously, including equitable housing, urban growth management, brownfield cleanup and development, and more.

Council Discussion:

Council President Peterson provided an update to the

Council about discussions surrounding rail connections between Portland and Salem, either through the extension of light rail or through Amtrak. She also raised the topic of high-speed rail and added that she would like to speak about asking for additional transportation funds at the state level.

Councilor Simpson thanked Annaliese Koehler for her work. He suggested the addition of another principle regarding the workforce and the cross-jurisdictional importance of economic development initiatives.

Council President Peterson noted no opposition to the suggestion and stated that it will be added as a principle.

Councilor Hwang wondered whether there might be any actions or investments related to the Downtown Portland task force. He also asked what specific housing actions the state legislature might take during the upcoming legislative session.

Koehler replied that she expects housing to be a top priority for the session. She stated that budget cuts are expected at the state level, which may impact local agencies who provide housing.

Councilor Hwang requested clarification regarding the state legislature's perspective on the housing crisis and homelessness, whether it is viewed as a district-by-district versus statewide issue.

Koehler answered that there is an effort to create a broader understanding of housing, homelessness, and behavioral health issues as being a statewide concern. There are currently statewide pilot programs being developed to

explore the issue further.

1:00 Chief Operating Officer Communication

Marissa Madrigal provided an update on the following events or items:

- There were none.

1:05 Councilor Communication

Councilors provided updates on the following meetings and events:

- Councilor Gonzalez provided several updates. Bienestar provided an all-Spanish presentation on housing, which received a high level of community engagement and feedback. He also presented at the Regional Transportation Class on Thursday the 7th. Finally, Councilor Gonzalez reminded Council that there will be a resolution the following week to recognize the work of the late Bob Salinger.
- Councilor Simpson reported his attendance to a Veteran's Day parade and expressed his appreciation for the positive community response to the celebrations.

1:15 Adjourn

There being no further business, Council President Peterson adjourned the Metro Work Session at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nicholas Cooley, Legislative Assistant