

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting
Date: Thursday March 16, 2023
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.*

Members in Attendance:

Marta McGuire, Metro
Alondra Flores-Avina, Trash for Peace
Sharetta Butcher, North by Northeast Community Health Center (NxNE)
Lindsay Marshall, City of Tualatin
Christa McDermott, Community Environmental Services, PSU
Audrey O'Brien, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Eben Polk, City of Portland
Thao Tu, Vietnamese Community of Oregon
Beth Vargas Duncan, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association (ORRA)
Ryan Largura, City of Troutdale
Andrew Bartlett, City of Hillsboro

1. CALL TO ORDER & MEETING OVERVIEW

Marta McGuire (Metro) brought the virtual meeting to order at 8:31 am and previewed the agenda.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments from the public.

4. Education Program Updates

Marta McGuire introduced Jon Mayer, Darwin Eustaquio and Paul Sanford from Metro.

Key points of the presentation included:

The presentation provided an overview of what the Community Service and Education division provides. This ranges from grants, youth and adult education, cleaning up dumped litter, toxics reduction, and providing low cost recycle paint. There are a variety of volunteer-based programs such as Master Recycler, Master Gardner, and Backyard Habitat Certification that provide resources to the community.

With the passing of the 1983 Opportunity to Recycle Act Metro became the primary agent in distributing department environmental quality in schools. Metro works with local governments to deliver these services. Topics such as climate change and environmental justice have been incorporated over time. Metro engages youth ages five to twenty-one. In person elementary, middle school and high school classes are provided four to five days a week by education coordinators. Metro supports Outdoor School, which includes four to six hours of waste reduction education. There is a two -three paid internship program that includes high school juniors. During the pandemic Metro education staff had to shift to online learning and produced over 60 pre-recorded

learning session. Now that learning is back in person these resources are still used either as pre-classroom materials which lets educators focus on their students lived experience more, or is an excellent tool for adult learners who can access the materials at their leisure. The Regional Waste Plan Progress Report data from 2018 shows that in the Metro reaches 12% of youth in the Metro area. Now that learning is back in person, Metro is on track to reach these levels again.

Metro partners with a variety of partners to provides toxics reduction information. Two new services are the *Solve Pest Problems* website. These services have been possible with a partnership with Oregon State University, City of Gresham, East Multnomah Soil Conservation District and West Multnomah Soil Conservation District. The goal of the website is to provide resources for individuals who use toxics (pesticides) often, what are their effects, risks and how to use less. Metro has also partnered with Clean River Collation and Oregon State University to create *What is your lawn style* campaign. The goal is to reduce toxics in waterways. This has been successful with community based social marketing. Additional programs are Environmental Promoters and Growing Gardens and the Master Gardner Program. This program has shifted its focus from pesticide use to how to garden with safer methods. Master Gardner volunteers have become a highly trusted service in the region.

Member Discussion:

Alondra Flores Avina asked if there have been challenges for youth in learning? Mr. Eustaquio responded that often students of color or from low-income communities do not feel seen or heard in the conservation movement.

Sharetta Butcher, NxNE, asked what schools the education team goes to, and if the two year internship program required that students participate in previous programs? Mr. Eustaquio responded that Metro serves all three counties in Metro jurisdiction and goes to private and public schools. The internship program is a standard recruitment that goes on the Metro website and reach out to community based organizations. They do not have to have participated in any previous Metro education programs.

Ryan Largura asked if the progress report broke down data by school, or only be county? Darwin responded that the report is at the county level, but that CSE keeps all the data so could produce requested infographics.

Mr. Largura asked for clarification on the RIC resources. Mr. Mayer responded that has technology tools have been added to the RIC, staff have been able to serve in other ways in the community, not just on the phone.

A question from the chat, does Metro approach schools, or do schools approach Metro to participate in these programs? And does Metro have an app for these services? Mr. Eustaquio responded that since Metro has been involved in education for over 30 years, many teachers are aware of these services but Metro also does reach out to them. Metro looks specifically at schools they haven't served in the past two years or more. Ms. McGuire responded that there is not currently an app.

Eben Polk, City of Portland, asked about the partnership programs. Are these funding supports or just collaboration? Mr. Sanford replied that there is funding involved in these partnerships.

Question from the chat, is Metro planning on updating and continuing to create online resources? Mr. Eustaquio responded that Metro will continue to create these but at a much slower pace.

Question from the chat, does Metro engage with recycling businesses? Mr. Mayer responded that yes, more specifically as it relates to the database and toxics reduction.

Christa McDermott, PSU, asked if Metro is considering how to incorporate structural behavioral change versus individual behavioral change? Mr. Sanford compared this idea to the yard campaign and the thought change that weeds are ok. Also that consumer demand has been a driver for change like in organic foods.

5. Recycling Modernization Act Update

Marta McGuire introduced Rosalynn Greene and Jill Hrycyk from Metro.

Key points of the presentation included:

The presentation recapped the Recycling Modernization Act. It will increase responsible recycling, include extended producer responsibilities and the recycling list is changing and will be unified across the state. A position statement was created from what was heard from many engagements that was used in rule making. Currently the RMA is in its' first rule making session. Materials are being drafted as well as convenience standards. A needs assessment is being completed by April 14th and a commingle recycling process technical workgroup is meeting to inform the second rulemaking. There are a variety of materials that are being recommended to be pulled from the recycling list, there is a list that could be recycled via depots. DEQ recommended that there should be 42 depots in the Portland/tri-county area. The RMA could be leveraged to build and expand depots. Options could include PRO's managing depots or Metro could manage them.

Member Discussion

Ms. McDermott asked who will service depots? And if lids would be collected at depots, would MRFs be able to handle them. Ms. Greene responded that operating depots will depend on path taken whether they would be owned by PRO's or Metro. Ms. Greene will bring the comment on lids to the advisory committee.

Beth Vargas Duncan, ORRA, did not see any mention that there are currently private depots in existence, and hopes they are considered. She also asked what a reload facility is, who regulates it who permits it, and how it fits into the system. Ms. Greene responded that Metro is collecting a list of existing depots and is induced in conversations. Reload facilities accept recycles from commercial haulers to consolidate materials and keep costs down.

Mr. Largura asked where are the PRO's in their research and development in new materials so we can shrink our list of materials needed to be recycled? Ms. Greene has responded that the RMA has fee structures in place to incentivize design of better packaging materials.

Mr. Polk asked if there is an opportunity to evaluate "return to point of sale" as an option for depots. Also what happens if depots are created and not used. Ms. Greene replied that the PRO Plan is how we keep the system accountable. The plan has goals and outcomes. Regarding the potential 42 depots, there is negotiating that could go one, like requesting funding for collection events instead of depot collection.

Final Remarks

Ms. McGuire put forth the February meeting minutes for approval. Ms. Vargas Duncan moved to approve the February minutes; Mr. Tu seconded. February minutes approved. Ms. McGuire gave a few final remarks to the committee.

Ms. Vargas Duncan requested that RWAC receive information on the WPES budget and solid waste fees. Ms. McGuire shared that an invitation and information about the budget setting process will be coming out shortly, and that Marta can provide a follow-up to RWAC.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:30 a.m.