

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting
Date: Thursday, August 17, 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-Aviña, 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)
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. Ms. McGuire shared that this will be the last meeting for Bun Kong and Thao Tu as their terms are ending.

2. Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan - Review Phase 3 Draft Scenarios follow-up

Marta introduced Estee Segal, and Luis Sandoval from Metro.

Key points of the presentation included:

This meeting was a follow up to the last conversation last month on the garbage and recycling systems. Facilities plan. Estee and Luis provide a presentation on the scenarios and development for the plan. At that time committee members had expressed as a desire to get more information on how the 3 alternative scenarios would impact the need for current and proposed policies. Specifically, committee members want a clarification on the wet waste ton edge allocations. The transfer station rate, oversight, and why we reuse was centered in the system facilities plan. Today's presentation is designed to provide that information, it will help answer those questions looking at the trade-offs and impacts of the scenarios.

Member Discussion:

Sharetta Butcher, North by Northeast Community Health Center, asked for clarification about the base minimum living wage. The wage is currently set at \$17.50. Sharetta commented that this is not considered a living wage in Portland, Oregon. Ms. McGuire responded that this conversation could be reviewed further.

Beth Vargas Duncan, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association asked a follow up about health and benefits, asking if these are included in the valuation of a living wage.

Ms. Vargas Duncan agreed that private transfer stations and Metro's stations are not comparable. She asked to hear more about Metro's rates and how Metro has used reserves in the past for its funding. Ms. McGuire replied that Metro is only allowed to charge as much as cost of serve at transfer stations. There has been conversation around how Metro funds capital improvements with reserve funding. Our entire fee is evaluated as paying for the entire solid waste system and not as a subsidy.

Christa McDermott, Portland State, asked if private transfer stations that opt out of the tonnage allocation program are given the minimum tonnage allocation. Ms. Vogt replied that they can receive tonnage for each goal they do meet.

Ryan Largura, City of Troutdale, asked if there was a point where Metro was not allocating tonnage and what were the rates then? Mr. Johnson replied that Metro has always assigned tonnage amounts, and are referred as tonnage caps. These were static numbers. These were equal numbers for the region not projected on forecasted tonnage. He confirmed that there has not been a "free market" system for haulers to use transfer stations at their will.

Mr. Largura asked if scenario B in the system facilities plan would allow this free market. Luis Sandoval replied that it would be a cap on rates not tonnage.

Mr. Largura also asked how do we compare public and private transfer stations in an apples to apples fashion? Is this possible? Mr. Sandoval replied that as an observation that each facility is unique so they all have different costs and objectives. So what is an apple? It would be impossible to make them be the same.

Mr. Largura added that while looking at the proposed scenarios what are the goals? Are we super imposing all public services onto private transfer stations?

Andrew Bartlett, City of Hillsboro, supports looking at how we can compare public and private stations in a more meaningful way. He also asked if there is a reasonable rate in goal 14. Ms. Stirnkorb replied that the values are being based off cost of service.

Ms. McDermott asked how we will reduce waste while relying on fees based on collecting waste. What scenario will be equitable and reduce waste and what role will transfer stations play in the system? What other policy tools around transparency are involved in the scenarios? Mr. Sandoval replied that the proposed scenarios are meant to include solutions to address as many gaps as possible in different ways. It could very well be a hybrid scenario that we adopt based on feedback.

Ms. Vargas Duncan would like to know the capacity of transfer stations when we speak about tonnage allocations. When we look at building new are we looking at expanding physical capacity or offer a new service. Mr. Sandoval replied that a capacity analysis was not completed.

Mr. Largura asked what is the demand from the reuse community for more materials? Ms. Start shared a story that an organization was offered to take 900 mattresses but they did not have the capacity to hold them for dispersal and had to turn them away.

Mr. Bartlett asked if there is an understanding of other platforms that are peer-to-peer like Facebook marketplace. Are these platforms taken into consideration? Ms. Start replied that there is a disconnect between these platforms and larger organizations. There is a need to make sure these systems are included especially since these interfaces allow for easier for users.

Ms. Vargas Duncan shared that industry has really benefited from Metro's grants, how are grants working for the reuse sector? Ms. Start replied that most non-profits are small and applying for grants is challenging. Their needs are also program specific not ongoing operations. Their work is also a community service and her opinion is that their work should be subsidized for their work they are doing for their communities.

Audrey O'Brien, DEQ, asked which scenarios best address the reuse needs identified? Ms. Start replied that scenario D would best benefit reuse by creating points where every part of the region

can be supported. Need to ask how are we working with haulers on how to collect items from people the best.

3. Schedule of Topics

Ms. McGuire reviewed the proposed schedule of topics for FY23-24.

Member Discussion:

Ms. Vargas Duncan asked if RWAC would be serving as a budget committee. Ms. McGuire replied no, but WPES wants to share level of investment for regional system programs with RWAC.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Terrell Garrett, Greenway, shared that there is a lot of discussion about wet waste, and no discussion about dry waste and no consideration of how a new system would impact the dry waste system. He is concerned about some of the systems putting him out of business. He also shared that more information should be shared about same-day recycling.

Final Remarks

Ms. McGuire moved the approval of meeting minutes to the next meeting. Shared that the September RWAC meeting will be cancelled to allow for committee members to participate in the symposium on September 27th.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:30 a.m.