



Meeting minutes

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting
Date: Thursday, June 17, 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.*

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)
Jenny Slepian, City of Lake Oswego
Beth Vargas Duncan, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association (ORRA)

Members Absent:

Eben Polk, Clackamas County

1. CALL TO ORDER & MEETING OVERVIEW

Roy Brower (Metro) brought the virtual meeting to order at 8:33 am and previewed the agenda.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no public comments.

3. SOLID WASTE SYSTEM FACILITIES PLAN

Will Elder (Metro) began by giving a bit of context for the solid waste system facilities plan. Metro Council asked staff last year to create a plan that would look specifically at the infrastructure needed to support the RWP and bring that back to them with some guidance and direction on the facilities that the WPES is looking to build in the near future. This plan is expected to look over the next 15 and 20 years. That goes beyond the RWP, but the primary focus is making sure that Metro has the infrastructure needed to support the goals in the RWP.

The first step has been to assess what is already documented in the past and complete an internal literature review, to look for direction and guidance as it relates to solid waste facilities, but then also really identify any gaps that are identified that would be within that system. The second step is a spatial analysis: looking at the existing facilities in the region, both private and public, and then thinking about what those gaps are in the current system as it relates to the region, as well as anticipating growth over the 15 and 20 year timeframe.

The next phase would be to do an engagement strategy, to look at ways that Metro could fill identified gaps as it relates again to infrastructure. Once staff have those gaps identified and an understanding of what the needs are, the next part of the process would be really to look at the options for achieving the outcomes that are desired. It could be public, private, or it could be a hybrid. There would be options ranging from depots to transfer stations, to collection events. The last component necessary for this plan is funding options available to make it happen. This is the broad framework for what staff sees of this plan, is that gap analysis outreach that identifies solutions and then actually presenting those options in a way that that can provide guidance in the future as that planning moves forward.

The work is still conceptual at this point. Staff are working to solidify the framework so that they can start developing a scope of work for the project.

The key questions posed by Mr. Elder:

1. Did staff miss any documents that we should be looking at as we identify gaps and needs in the solid waste system?
2. Is this framework that we're considering an appropriate framework, or have we either narrowed or expanded the scope of this project too much?
3. How would this group like to be engaged as we move forward with this planning process?

Shannon Martin (City of Gresham) asked if this study will also look at the growth and capacity of existing systems and seeing where those gaps are, and if there is additional capacity needed in certain areas of the region.

Mr. Elder responded that they expect to look at future growth. Staff expect to be able to use current data sets to anticipate growth and need.

Jill Kolek (City of Portland) thinks it is an important project to bring to this group because it sets the table for a lot of future work and things the group will be discussing. She asked about small recycling depots and if any of the background documents address that in any way, and will staff be doing additional research on that?

Mr. Elder responded that the documents don't identify to that level. But staff would be looking at that, because there should be an assortment of options for achieving an outcome that's identified.

Ms. Kolek noted that Portland used to have a pretty robust depot situation which has mostly gone away. It'll be interesting to look at suburban versus urban.

Audrey O'Brien (DEQ) asked if Metro also thinking about other EPR options as part of facility planning. And maybe going further than the reuse repair and looking at opportunities for waste prevention and upstream work as part of facilities planning.

Mr. Elder shared that currently the plan is a look at hard assets. But it is hard to plan for hard assets, and infrastructure without considering what future policies might drive materials. So to answer the question, it's not a direct issue that staff are taking up with this plan, but it will influence what sort of facilities would be needed in the future.

Ms. Carrera asked if any of the background materials include anything that speaks to community input. The titles of the documents don't make that apparent, but maybe there's sections in those documents that speak to previous community engagement that can serve as a baseline.

Mr. Elder responded that all of the documents listed at some point had some sort of community engagement. But realizing whose voice is represented will be important in this. What staff want to do is figure out what wasn't said and who best to inform that. Mr. Elder noted that there's been engagement, but there is room to improve. Staff are starting to see the benefits of having a broader engagement strategy.

Ms. Kolek added that repair share work has so many great community led initiatives. That should be part of the scan because that work's already happening, and it'd be great way to see how a public-private partnership could be brokered as part of this process. It's a pretty vital piece of information.

4. PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP LEGISLATION UPDATE

Jennifer Payne (Metro) gave an update on a couple of investments Metro is making in cleanup around the region. The department got \$1 million from the Investments and Innovation Grants Program, specifically the Community Services and Education Division.

Farah Fatemi (Metro) noted that Metro is working on resuming some of the household hazardous waste (HHW) collection in the community. Staff is focusing on supporting partnerships and community partners that are offering events in the community where Metro can come in and offer a collection of high priority materials that are HHW, such as medical sharps, medications, and batteries. Staff have already started some of these events, working with important partners like the North by Northeast Community Health Center, Trash for Peace, Home Forward, and Life Change Church. Through 2021, Metro is looking at about 10 to 15 of these community driven events and some of those will involve local government partners as well. In a select number of these community events, Metro is offering funds to support bulky waste collection at those events. Community partners are helping with that effort for bulky waste. In late summer and fall, Metro will be looking at bringing back five to six of the larger-scale HHW collection events. Metro is trying to focus on areas that are a priority in terms of equity that have been historically underserved in the past.

Sharetta Butcher (NxNE) asked if the Community Warehouse a part of that bulky waste event.

Ms. Fatemi replied that Community Warehouse has been in conversation with Trash for Peace, but they weren't at that first event. Alondra Flores Aviña would know if they were there in that first event.

Alondra Flores Aviña (Trash for Peace) replied that there wasn't any other partner organizations present. Trash for Peace reached out, but a lot of them are at capacity, but the team will be reaching out to more organizations and partners.

Ms. Sharetta Butcher responded that some of the bulky items that are given away probably could be reused through the Community Warehouse program.

Ms. Payne shared where the \$1 million in funds was being distributed:

- Private/public partnerships (partnering primarily with BIPOC owned businesses): working in the space to increase the number of crews out in the community = \$325,000 (estimate 2 crews/4 FTE)
- Financial support for local community groups, small business and local governments for cleanup disposal costs = \$430,000
- Increase the donation of MetroPaint for graffiti abatement in public spaces = \$330,000
- Two positions (2 FTE): one to coordinate the sponsorships program and one the paint program. And those are budgeted for limited duration, but at the end of the year

Ms. Flores Aviña asked if is there any current partners in outer east Portland that will be happening in the summer or fall.

Ms. Fatemi responded that the locations that are in that area are mostly at Life Change Church which is around 162nd. Metro is potentially looking at talking with other community partners to offer events in that area and Metro may be adding some events to the list that could be in that area which is a priority. Typically these events work best in areas where there's a big parking lot and some space to do collections. They welcome suggestions as well.

Mr. Egleston wanted to advocate for more base level capacity for HHW on the west side. There are no permanent facilities on the west side. It's a community of a county of 600,000 people. And there is a significant volume of phone calls about how to manage hazardous waste and where the Metro events are. And staff are growing increasingly concerned that some of those materials are ending up in the solid waste stream. Staff don't have any evidence to back that up, but based on the kinds of calls and the frustration of being told they need to drive into Portland or Oregon City to manage that waste has given a lot of concern. He wanted to advocate for not just smaller scale events and focused in social equity areas, but also the large scale to get the propane cylinders and the paint out of garages.

Ms. Fatemi replied that there will be a few events in Washington County in the fall. Staff can also be reaching out to the county team to talk about the smaller partner events that could be offered on the west side.

Mr. Martin expressed support for more services like this for the community. From Gresham's perspective, they would love to be working with Metro on this and collaborating on this work. It's always great to get updates in these meetings and hear about these new programs, but he would like to be more engaged with Metro as they're coming into the communities to serve folks. He would like to better understand how the partnership with haulers could enhance those services. So Metro doesn't have to be creating new work crews to do this work and find new additional ways to enhance services.

Ms. Vargas Duncan noted that there are depots with private transfer stations that do collect items and when there are shortages, she noted that it's helpful to not forget the private partners that also help. She wanted to note the importance of keeping the private facilities as part of the dialogue. But she appreciates the events and the work that Metro's doing, especially in HHW.

Ms. McDermott felt a little unclear as to how much RID Patrol is back up and going. She sees some of the bulky waste problem in the Metro area being like chasing bulky waste. How much is RID Patrol up and running?

Mr. Brower responded that the department got a budget amendment approved in April 2021. There is the one Metro crew and two contract crews through Central City Concern. Metro has opted not to continue using incarcerated crews from Multnomah County. As part of the April amendment, RID Patrol is adding three new Metro-run crews. The team is using workers through POIC and Constructing Hope to staff those crews. Metro just hired the three crew leaders. The challenge right now is getting trucks and trailers. The global supply chain on trucks is really backed up because of COVID-19 and everything going on with the economy and production. The hope is to have trucks by August.

Ms. Payne acknowledged that these are one time investments, but that staff are working over the next month with local government partners and internally on the bulky waste work plan, because of the length of time before the service standards.

Ms. Kolek shared that Portland is doing work around this - there is a lot of focus and city of Portland has a significant contract that's coming out to solve to do volunteer litter, cleanups, and then with the Houseless Encampment program, which has a doubling budget. There's a massive amount of effort that's getting ramped up that's going to really show up here. She thinks what's not happening so much, and what is being discussed here is housed people and bulky waste and making it as easy as possible for people to properly discard or hopefully recover the material.

Mr. Brower added that Metro has provided some additional resources to SOLVe and have had Waste Management donate drop boxes at a number of cleanup sites throughout the region, not just in Portland, but in a number of jurisdictions and Metro is coordinating that, and helping cover disposal costs when those boxes get filled and go to the transfer station.

Mr. Egleston added that the Washington County Board of Commissioners gave their informal approval for the county to start embarking on a pilot program for helping support homeless encampments and managing them proactively, and that's going to include a variety of strategies on the west side. One of those strategies is managing the solid waste associated with encampments. He looks forward to a continued dialogue with Metro staff and the RID Patrol team and seeing how these groups can partner together and make sure the whole region is benefiting from these enhanced services.

Mr. Martin shared a personal story that he has multiple people in his neighborhood that put stuff in the right-of-way instead of front of their house with a "free, take please" sign. He's had to explain to them multiple times that things are disappearing because you're putting it on the other side of your lot. The city is picking it up, not necessarily the public. He thinks this has become the new normal for a lot of people. There are questions about how to educate the public more about this.

Mr. Brower responded that one of the programs Metro had before COVID-19 was a tagging program for bulky waste, which put a big sticker that says "this has been illegally dumped and you have three days to remove it." Prior to the pandemic when Metro used that program, about 50% of that waste disappeared and whoever put it there, dealt with it.

Ms. Sharetta Butcher echoed Mr. Martin's comments and looked forward to exploring possible partnerships with North by Northeast on this work with bulky waste.

5. METROPAINT STRATEGIC PLAN AND STAFFING UPDATE

Lake Thelen (Metro) began with some background on MetroPaint. The MetroPaint facility at its inception, was focused on helping to achieve environmental goals. But the RWP has brought a new lens to the work on how Metro can use the program to also advance shared prosperity in the solid waste system and good jobs to increase both the social and human benefits of the garbage and recycling system. Her presentation aims to share the strategic goals for the MetroPaint Program, and also present a staffing proposal that staff are bringing to the Metro Council which would eliminate the dependence on contracted staff at the facility and also address some other pressing needs for the team. This does require an amendment to next year's budget and due to the timeline of the strategic plan development and financial analysis, staff were unable to meet the original fiscal year 21- 22 deadline for the budgeting system. The cost impact is around \$450,000.

Staff have envisioned MetroPaint as a community asset that is keeping waste out of the landfill, producing high quality recycled paint for sale and donation in the community and also providing equitable workforce opportunities. The strategic planning process identified six priorities of focus, not just on that business side of MetroPaint, but also focusing on workforce development, public outreach and partnerships, safe and efficient operations, and fiscal responsibility. These are the priorities to be incorporated both in the short-term and the long-term for the program vision.

Andrew Staab (Metro) provided a brief overview of the program. MetroPaint receives hundreds of thousands of gallons of leftover latex paint each year from all over the state and currently employ 25 staff to process it, primarily contracted staff. MetroPaint maintains numerous community and, public/private partnerships, including Miller Paint, the primary distributor, and Oregon Paint Care, which pays Metro to recycle leftover paint and accounts for more than half of the program revenue each year. Over the last 20 years, the amount of paint we receive for recycling has continuously increased, but staffing levels have never kept up with that pace.

Mr. Staab explained that the budget amendment addresses important equity issues in the program, and provides tangible benefits to the staff which is primarily composed of people of color. While there are two other proposed positions in the amendment, the focus is on the workforce equity benefits associated with transitioning 12 contracted staff over to Metro employees. MetroPaint has been utilizing contracted staff labor for 25 years. Currently, 12 contracted staff work full-time alongside Metro staff doing the same work, but they do not receive any vacation time, medical

benefits or job protections. The current staffing model, including lack of health benefits and paid leave result in issues with retention workflow and team morale. Over the last 15 years, 63% of contracted staff left MetroPaint before reaching one year of employment with the program. Whereas 91% of Metro staff stay at least three years with our program. In addition to the transition of contracted staff to regular status, the team is recommending a variable hour public outreach position to be transitioned to regular status and a manager position would be approved. The public outreach position is the only employee at the facility dedicated to coordinating all paint sales donation and marketing.

Ms. Thelen shared that staff are recommending between 25 and 30% system fee contribution to fill the gaps in the program costs. This change won't necessitate a rate increase this year or in coming years. The funding is already present in the department's budget. Please see the presentation slides attached at the end of the minutes to see expenses table. So far, Metro Councilors have overall expressed support for a summer amendment.

Ms. Vargas Duncan noted that she, is the ORRA representative, wanted to say that their principles and values align in regard to living wages and advancing diversity and equity and in workforce. But they do not have an official position on this MetroPaint transaction. She emphasized that this would not require any fee increases now or in the future that this is currently within the budget and anticipated to be so into the future. She wanted to note those statements.

Ms. Slepian expressed that it important that MetroPaint does do this, especially with the tonnage allocation process and asking haulers to basically offer the same level of benefits. It's important that Metro also lead by example. She fully supports this effort to make them full-time employees with benefits and a livable wages.

Ms. McDermott expressed that it was particularly helpful seeing how the Paint Care revenue ties into MetroPaint's efforts. She asked about the two budgets presented for the next two years. That was if the staffing plan goes ahead as proposed in terms of making the positions permanent instead of working with the contractors.

Ms. Thelen clarified that the graphic was for the fiscal year 2022 and a projection out about five years into 2026 to see what the change would look like. And it is just including the 12 contracted staff becoming regular status, the one public outreach position becoming regular status and the manager being formalized as a position. Those are all staff that are working at MetroPaint.

Ms. McDermott asked if the budget for FY22, it depends on there being a million from the regional system fee. If the goals of an EPR program like Paint Care are coming true in that it's supposed to be costing governments less. She thinks this is a great service that Metro provides and it would be great if industry was actually paying more for it. It's more of a public service. She's always looking at how municipalities shouldn't be paying for this and for the public. She's glad to see it supporting more equitable positions and I hope to see more revenue coming from industry to support.

Andrew Staab noted that there is a lot of potential for greater paint sales with a marketing position. MetroPaint in the past relied solely on word-of-mouth. There is a lot of sales potential still.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & UPDATES

Mr. Brower reviewed the coming months of topics for the committee. He also shared a status update on filling the vacant/soon-to-be vacant seats on the committee. He mentioned considering the development of a proposal to accommodate alternatives for committee members at the monthly meetings. He solicited feedback from the committee. His recommendation was to have a specific alternate available so as to not have a lot of different people joining the formal meetings. He wants to make sure that whoever is at the table is well-informed and knows what the committee has been doing.

MEETING AJOURNED at 10:02 a.m.