



# Meeting minutes

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting  
Date: Thursday, December 16, 2021  
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 10 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 W. Brower, Metro  
Peter Brandom, City of Hillsboro  
Sharetta Butcher, North by Northeast Community Health Center (NxNE)  
Alondra Flores Aviña, Student  
Bunsereyrythy Kong, Oregon Cambodian Buddhist Society  
Lindsay Marshall, City of Tualatin  
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  
Arianne Sperry, City of Portland  
Thao Tu, Vietnamese Community of Oregon  
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 8:34 am and previewed the agenda.

## **2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

There were no comments from the public.

## **3. METRO FOOD SCRAPS POLICY & FOOD WASTE PROCESSING PROJECT (Q&A)**

Eben Polk (Clackamas County) asked about the additional amount of renewable gas the actual estimated amount. It is interesting to know approximately how many homes could be powered and he is curious about the amount of renewable gas that's likely to be produced. He also asked where the costs are going and if the value is coming back to Metro.

Will Elder (Metro) responded that the number of houses we do have more detail. One of our counselors asked the same question. And so in order to give it into a, provide a contextual response, that's why we produce that answer, but I can provide a lot more detail, as far as the actual generation numbers. We used our consultant as well as Jenna Garmon who's our sustainability manager to help calculate those. And so I'll go through those email exchanges and pull up some more of that information that I can share with this group. As far as the value to Metro as with all materials, there tends to be more of a cost associated with it than a revenue generation. And in this case, really the benefits are the regional waste goals, achieving our reduction in greenhouse gas.

Certainly the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental science or services will receive those credits from producing that. But that doesn't even offset the cost of the investment that they're putting in. So I don't think that they view it even as a revenue generator, as much as an offset to the cost of the investment. Cost numbers will be reviewed in January, and a bid submitted in February.

#### **4. COMMITTEE WORKING AGREEMENTS: Review**

Noelle Dobson (Metro) discussed draft working agreements and presented edits for approval. She addressed number four under committee participation, the edit reflects that there are multiple ways where committee members can provide input via email. This is to recognize there are other ways to participate in the meetings than directly speaking. Casey Mellnik will sending an email to the group to share a full email list for everyone. Edit approved by the group.

Edit to the advisory committee's role and decision making: references to RWAC ever being delegated a decision were deleted and clarified that the primary role of the committee is to provide committee input to leadership, the COO's office council.

Ms. Dobson clarified the green, yellow, red card process. Identifying that would be a process that would be used when the committee is asked for a formal committee recommendation. Other dialogue and checking for agreement or disagreement can be done less formally.

RWAC's role in decision making under number three, should be edited to say that the committee will use the green, yellow, decision making process. It's not something that happens prior to the decision making process. It is the decision making process.

Ms. Mellnik will send updated copy to the committee.

#### **5. EDUCATION TOPIC**

Jon Mayer (Metro) shared an overview of efforts within education outreach programs that are focused on community based and adult education. He shared that all of Metro's education programs are focused on collaboration. These programs are also rooted in multicultural educational pedagogy, striving to be culturally relevant and culturally responsive. This includes educational and developmental needs, as well as the needs that are within communities, neighborhoods and families.

Jennifer Payne (Metro) presented on the community waste prevention team. The team works in partnership with local governments, community based organizations and directly with the community to reduce waste. Efforts are focused on communities that are under-served by the garbage and recycling system and services, and have been most impacted by the negative effects of toxics and other waste. The team has a group of folks working grants and investments. We also have folks who provide technical assistance through the recycling information center, as well as staff who support local government partners. Short term goals are focused on meaningful relationship building and supporting leaders in their communities doing this work. Longer term goals include community capacity, building career past development and leadership roles in solid waste.

Bunsereyrihy Kong (Oregon Cambodian Buddhist Society) asked, "What if people from my communities want to join the program, do they have any criteria or what do they prepare to join in the program?"

Ms. Payne responded that contact information would be provided to Mr. Kong.

Topics covered in these education programs include the basics of material management, recycling the right types of materials, toxics reduction, food waste, and basics around sustainability. The core of these programs is trying to emphasize community knowledge and expertise. The program has

worked with Home Forward, Trash for Peace, Environmental Promoters, North by Northeast Community Health Center, and the Washington County waste staff to implement these programs. It is important to note that COVID has not stopped these efforts. They have continued to be supported through virtual engagement methods, and offering stipends for technology or laptops.

Christa McDermott (PSU) asked if the environmental promoters program is supported with ongoing grant funding, and what's the longevity for programs like this.

Ms. Payne and Mr. Mayer responded that these programs have been running for three to four years, and that they are being supported by intergovernmental agreements and contracts.

Mr. Mayer explained the toxics reduction and outreach prevention programs. These include the Natural Gardening Program and the Healthy Homes Program. Metro collects and safely disposes of regional household hazardous waste. That includes toxic products like pesticides and cleaning products. These products are very costly to the region, because of cost and having a negative effect on people's health, waterways and soil, and they disproportionately affect BIPOC communities.

Metro has a broad focus on toxics, allowing collaboration different local governments and organizations that might have a more narrow focus. Examples include, Regional Water Providers education campaigns, around water pollution and pesticides. Metro installs medical sharp drop boxes, and have collection events with community organizations and BIPOC communities. In addition, Metro works with workforce development organizations to provide different workshops on natural gardening and green cleaner topics. The feedback that Metro has received has helped spark many new partnerships and programs. This includes My Hair, My Health Program which was originally run out of Oregon State University. My Hair, My Health focuses on health and wellness for African American and African women in the Portland area.

Another partnership is with Growing Gardens which works with Spanish language education for the natural gardening program and the Healthy Homes Program. Growing Gardens, hires educators from communities and neighborhoods to become community organizers and educators in their own neighborhoods. Also, Metro has partnered with OSU Extension, City of Gresham and East Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation District to develop and provide Spanish language trainings for landscapers on pesticide safety, using less pesticides and marketing those skills to clients. Participants will receive an OSU certification. The City of Gresham and some other EcoBiz partners are working to make it easier for small businesses to be able to become EcoBiz Certified.

Eben Polk (Clackamas County) asked if this new OSU certification will apply for landscaping operations.

Mr. Meyer replied that EcoBiz is focused around providing a directory for people to be able to see this business as EcoBiz Certified. So OSU certification is going to be different. It will be similar to OSU's Master Gardener certification. People will go through the training and then they become certified on pesticide safety training, and then can share that certification. Metro has created a new virtual learning page, which has many videos on Metro gardening and healthy homes. Metro has also partnered with OSU Extension, City of Gresham, City of Portland, East Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation, and West Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation to provide a website called Solve Pest and Weed Problems. The website provides people with different solutions for dealing with pests at home, using preventative measures and less toxic products. This is scheduled to be launched June of next year.

Enrique Vargas (Metro) presented about community service and outreach efforts within the region. These efforts include bulky waste collection, household waste collection and community education opportunities. Community led support from Metro and local jurisdictions designed these programs to remove barriers from disposal and include a wide range of services based on community need.

COVID required modification to the approach to collection and outreach efforts. Focusing on safety Metro was able to co-create and host 18 smaller collection events, and these all included sharps medication and battery collection. It is important that the focus was on high hazards and a few of these events were paired with larger bulky waste collection events. The need for these services has only increased during the pandemic. An example includes a collection event at the new Columbia apartments earlier this summer. Partners were; Trash for Peace, North Bend, Northeast, Home Forward, James Recycling and Community Warehouse to co-create and co-host a series of bulky waste collection events. Six days of collection were held, which resulted in safe disposal of over 200 cubic yards of bulky waste, recycling of 20 cubic yards of plastic styrofoam and the recycling of mattresses. And as well as the recycling of a cubic yards of scrap metal, collection of sharps, medications and batteries. This series of collection events also offered youth education opportunities, community promoter workshops, a vaccine clinic, raffle prizes, snacks for the community and a DJ. All these services went into creating a welcoming, entertaining, and beneficial service for the community

Mr. Vargas shared that he is personally looking forward to taking the lessons learned in creating more opportunities to serve the community and truly hopes this is only the beginning. Community members have shared their appreciation for these services and this excites me. It's essential that Metro continue to listen and work together to provide meaningful service for the communities of the region. And thank you so much and I'd be happy to answer any questions that you have.

Mr. Kong asked if these collection events include pick up at homes, in addition to all the other services.

Mr. Vargas confirmed that Metro worked with a local business to remove the furniture when needed from folks' homes and help unload vehicles once they came to the collection point.

Shannon Martin (City of Gresham) asked if there was feedback on why there was such a large turnout for the event.

Mr. Vargas replied that some folks were not aware of regular services, transportation issues, cost is always an issue, and the date was aligned with people's move out dates at the location.

Mr. Brower added that RID Patrol is cleaning up close to a thousand abandoned mattresses, furniture, refrigerators every year through the illegal dumping program. This issue was discussed at the previous council meeting, and is at the top of mind for a lot of elected leaders in this region right now.

Ms. McDermott asked how many bulky waste events are scheduled each year.

Mr. Mayer responded that there might be one or two on the horizon, and that a discussion on how to better plan these events could follow.

Ms. Vargas Duncan (ORRA) outlined three categories in bulky waste collection and how each have their own challenges. These include multifamily, single family and illegal dumping. Each has their own challenges to address. The commercial partners are involved in different ways for each of these categories, and are particular focused on multifamily bulky waste collection, and are starting to have conversations on how to better assist with illegal dumping.

Ms. Payne presented an update on the Refresh Fund. The program now has a coordinator, Cayla Pruett. It is focused on providing services to communities with particular barriers to garbage and recycling services. It also includes graffiti abatement.

Mr. Meyer included that Metro Paint is switching it's color palette. There will be 12 new colors. Old colors are being sold at 60% off.

Peter Brandom (City of Hillsboro) commented that the lack of toxic collections has been exacerbated with COVID. The need to find other, more durable collection methods needs to change over time.

Mr. Brower thanked the Community Outreach and Education team highlighting their ability to navigate the pandemic. In 2020, there were basically zero collection events. In 2021, there were roughly seven or eight collection events, but they were difficult to remain socially distant, and have since been abandoned until 2022. New sites are being identified for use, as well as including collection of sharps, medications and bulky waste.

## **6. SCHEDULE OF TOPICS – review**

Mr. Brower gave a preview of what's coming, in January and February. In January, the topic will be the regional waste plan progress report to discuss and get your input.

In February, the garbage and recycling system facilities will present to the group. Metro intends to launch an exhaustive 20 year plan to look at what is missing in the system? What are the gaps? What are the needs? Is specifically addresses the need for a facility on the west side of the region. This will be a fairly extensive process to go through, and will act as a complimentary plan to the regional waste plan, but more focused on the hard facility needs both with public and private sector.

March's discussion will be on material recovery facility standards, policy update, and potential code changes.

April's discussion will be on the youth education team.

**7. FINAL REMARKS:** Mr. Brower gave a few final remarks to the committee.

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