

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting
Date: Thursday, October 19, 2023
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 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)
Jackie Kirouac-Fram, Rebuilding Center
Teresa Gaddy
Kathy Folsom, Washington County
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
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. Marta introduced new members Kathy Folsom and Jackie Kirouac-Fram.

2. Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan – Symposium Recap

Marta introduced Estee Segal, Luis Sandoval from Metro.

Key points of the presentation included:

Presenters reviewed the System Facilities Plan Reuse, Recycling and Garbage Symposium held on September 27, 2023. Guest speakers spoke about their innovations in reuse, recycling and composting in their region. The second half of the day was a workshop where participants reviewed 4 draft scenarios for the systems facilities plan. The scenarios are reviewed in the discussion guide and the draft scenario survey will be open through the end of October. This information can be accessed on the project website: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/garbage-and-recycling-system-facilities-plan>

Member Discussion:

Christa McDermott asked if the planned winter meeting with Council will be public? Ms. Segal replied that it would be.

Sharetta Butcher expressed her appreciation for the effort the project team has put in to include so many voices in this project. As a community member she feels her voice has been heard in this project.

Eben Polk, City of Portland, expressed appreciation for the teams work and symposium. In addition, he doesn't feel that his colleagues are ready to truly suggest a preferred scenario and would like more time to talk through the scenarios.

Beth Vargas Duncan, ORRA, expressed appreciation for the symposium. Wanted to focus the conversation on commercial hauling and self haul access. Industry is interested in looking at this. Also very interested in looking at the upcoming impacts of the Recycling Modernization Act and how that will encourage use of existing facilities.

3. Mattress Producer Responsibility Legislation Update

Marta introduced Sabrina Gogol from Metro.

Key points of the presentation included:

Presenters reviewed Oregon's Mattress Stewardship Act. Manufacturers will be required to provide mattress disposal. Metro took the lead on supporting a mattress vision project that has established outcomes for how mattresses will be handled in the Metro region moving forward. Public comment on the producer's plan will be submitted this November, and their plan will be implemented starting late summer 2024.

Member Discussion:

Mr. Polk asked if we anticipate that a store delivering a mattress will take the old mattress away during delivery? Similarly, are haulers participating in this system? Ms. Gogol replied the law requires compensation for collection sites who work with the producer responsibility organizations. The act of hauling is not covered in the law. PRO does have their plan out for comment and would suggest adding this on public comment. Retailers are not required to participate but the proposed plan does include partnering with retailers for this service.

Jackie Kirouac-Fram, Rebuilding Center, asked if there is an opportunity for mattress reuse? Ms. Gogol replied that the PRO is required to prioritize reuse. Can send the proposed plan for review. There is no financial incentive for reuse in the current plan but we can provide public comment on this topic.

4. Rate Transparency

Marta introduced Holly Stirnkorb from Metro.

Key points of the presentation included:

The Private Rate Transparency project would conduct a cost-of-service study on private transfer stations. Currently, rates in the region are not well understood and it is not possible to determine if rates are reasonable based on the cost of service. Metro has two major policies that address private rates. The Regional Waste Plan, goal 14, aims at advancing regional rates that are reasonable and responsive to user economic needs. The second policy is the 2016 Transfer Station Configuration policy which aims to ensure that the private transfer system ensures maximum public benefit. Metro does not currently regulate rates but does have the authority to do so if Metro Council decides it is in the public best interest.

Member Discussion:

Kathy Folsom, Washington County, shared that Washington County urges Metro to perform this rate review study. Washington county performs rate reviews yearly, but can only determine if expenses were incurred, we do not know what costs were or level of profit. Since there is no competition rate payers are captive to paying rates that are set every year.

Ms. Vargas Duncan acknowledges the concerns local governments have with private transfer station rates. There are concerns about Metro operating transfer stations while regulating other transfer stations. There is enough commercial capacity in the region. The industry is concerned about sharing confidential information. Information through residential rate review information was shared publicly through public information requests. Concerns also exist when comparing Metro's rates to private rates because of Metro's use of reserves.

Mr. Polk supports moving forward with this project and performing a cost of service study. Because the system behaves like a public utility have full details would help ensure confidence for rate payers and surface. What would the timeline be? Ms. Stirnkorb replied that a 3rd party would start convening the industry stakeholders in January and the full project would take 9-12 months.

Andrew Bartlett, City of Hillsboro, supports moving forward with this project. Wanted to share that smaller load size tip fees can have as much as %20 increase in fees. Because of location of transfer stations, it is not economical that customers drive to the cheaper transfer stations. This project could help address this inequity.

Audrey O'Brien, DEQ, shared that DEQ is also working on collecting similar information as part of implementing the Recycling Modernization Act. DEQ may not have an opinion about this, but understands that collecting this information is helpful in contributing to decision-making that benefits the region and the state.

Christa McDermott, supports moving forward with this project. If the rates are supposed to be reasonable, regionally consistent and well understood, this study is meant to help support making things well understood. The only other option would be that transfer stations offer their information willingly which they do not appear to be willing to do.

Sharetta Butcher supports moving forward with this project. with the project for already stated reasons. The areas with higher rates are often in lower-income areas.

Lindsay Marshall, City of Tualatin, supports moving this project forward.

Alondra Flores-Aviña, feels thinking about equity is very important when thinking about this topic and that more education around it would be helpful.

Ms. Kirouac-Fram supports the process. Asked if there is a sense of why rates are different. Ms. Vargas Duncan replied that it really varies for each transfer station to provide varied services. Forest Grove for example has a higher rate but offers self haul as well a truck wash. Both of these services are expensive.

Are we specifically talking about self haul rates, or does this conversation include self haul and commercial? Ms. Stirnkorb replied that this project would be evaluating wet waste removal, which primarily excludes self haul.

Ryan Largura, City of Troutdale, supports moving forward with this project. Troutdale relies on Metro's ability to regulate to set appropriate fees.

Ms. McDermott asked if private transfer stations haven't been willing to offer this information so how will they be made to share this information? Ms. McGuire replied that Metro has the authority to stipulate private facilities share this information with formal direction from Council.

5. Bulky Waste Policy Project Phase 2 and Pilot Update

Marta introduced Sara Kirby and Casey Mellnik from Metro.

Key points of the presentation included:

Presenters reviewed the bulky waste project that is taking a holistic look at what bulky services are being provided for single and multi-family homes for collection. This project is not looking beyond the curb services. Metro has authority using the regional service standard in code 5.15.130 which sets standards for collections in the region. The project is currently in phase 3, performing a bulky waste pilot in Gresham. This study will help better understand waste generation rates and cost of service for standards development. The goal is to create a reliable data set on waste generation rates and total cost of bulky waste collection that can be used to inform future policy on bulky waste collection.

Member Discussion:

Ms. Flores Aviña asked where it says no items accepted, are those being picked up and data collected? Ms. Mellnik replied that as much as possible the pilot is supposed to mirror existing collecting. Items such as paint will not be collected. The collection company would then contact the property manager and let them know there are items that can't be collected.

Will there be a survey for residents and property managers at the end of the pilot? Ms. Mellnik replied that stakeholders will be engaged toward the conclusion of the pilot. But likely will be engaged before it is over.

Ms. Kirouac-Fram asked if items going to community warehouse are being collected items based on item condition for reuse. Ms. Kirby confirmed.

What is the intended outcome of this process? Ms. Kirby replied that the intended outcome is to further clarify the existing rule around bulky waste service.

Ms. Kirouac-Fram moved from Missouri and they had monthly bulky item pickup that was included in your monthly bill. It was a very straightforward system. Hoping we can find a simple and straightforward solution.

Mr. Polk wanted to acknowledge that the City of Portland has a lot of work to do in this space. Thank you for acknowledging the work local governments have been performing regarding bulky waste. There is a balance between a strict regulation versus how local governments can have the flexibility to meet their specific community needs.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mark Ottenad, City of Wilsonville, Government Affairs Director, wanted to congratulate Metro's work on the symposium which he attended. The City of Wilsonville will be submitting a letter. He shared that the online form was no longer open.

Kristin Leichner, owner of Pride Disposal, wanted to speak on the rate transparency topic and why private facilities may have higher tip fees than Metro. Firstly private facilities have different economies of scale, Metro mandates that Metro facilities receive 40% of the wet waste tonnage in the region, and private facilities only receive 10%. Per ton costs are always higher than Metro's costs. Her facility has capacity than the tonnage she is allocated. But just because tonnage goes down does not mean fixed costs such as buildings and equipment don't go down. The tonnage cap that is in place limits the tons that costs can be spread across. Company also is subject to many business expenses such as taxes that Metro is not subject to. Her company has matched Metro's fees the past few years. Metro has acknowledged that their costs are being subsidized by reserves which her company does not. These reserves are coming from fees that private facilities pay. While her

company has matched Metro fees this has reduced her rate of return making it harder for them to build reserves and reinvest in her company.

Final Remarks

Ms. McGuire asked for the approval of May, July, and August meeting minutes. Beth Vargas Duncan motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Andrew Bartlett seconded the motion with the following revisions:

- May minutes, Beth Vargas Duncan wanted to clarify that her request for earlier budget engagement was meant to request earlier engagement with the Regional Waste Advisory Committee, not earlier engagement with herself.
- July minutes, remove the question mark in Kristin Leichner's comment.
- August minutes, revise Eben Polk's employer to City of Portland.

The minutes were unanimously approved.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:30 a.m.