

MEETING SUMMARY
METRO SOLID WASTE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SWAC)
 Metro Regional Center, Council Chambers
 Thursday, October 21, 2010

Members / Alternates Present:

Matt Korot, Chair	Bruce Walker	Michelle Poyourow
Scott Keller	Dave White	Susan Millhauser
Theresa Koppang	Rick Winterhalter	Paul Ehinger, Alternate
Leslie Kochan (substituting for DEQ rep. Audrey O'Brien)		

Members / Alternates Absent:

Audrey O'Brien	Amy Pepper
Adam Winston	John Lucini

Guests and Metro staff:

Jennifer Erickson, Metro	Alando Simpson, City of Roses	Bruce Philbrick, Metro
Meredith Sorenson, Harvest Pwr.	Dick Stringer, WMSWCD	Ray Phelps, Allied Waste
Tom Chaimov, Metro	Leslie Kochan, DEQ	Roy Brower, Metro
Segeni Mungai	Easton Cross, Allied Waste	Stephanie Page, ODA
Fawn McNeely, Legislative Advocates	Holly Stirnkorb, Tabor Consult.	Gina Cubbon, Metro
Dean Kampfer, WMO		

I. Welcome and Review of AgendaMatt Korot

Matt Korot thanked everyone for their attendance, and mentioned that if possible, the meeting would end ahead of schedule to accommodate some attendees who had other obligations soon after 11:00 a.m.

He referenced the policy discussion papers sent to the members preceding the meeting; today's charge would be to verify that the thoughts presented represent previous SWAC discussion. It would take two meetings to discuss all the items; after which the members will decide which items, if any, to move forward to the Metro Council.

VI. Food Waste Recovery Policies Discussion PaperMatt Korot, All

The Committee agreed to skip ahead to Agenda Item 6, devoting the entire meeting to the items it encompassed. The advance material included two items which referred to food waste; this particular item, Mr. Korot explained, was a broad view of how to increase recovery of food waste. For purposes of definition, "supply side" would be actions taken to get the material from the generators; "demand" would refer to the reload aspect.

The group was shown a map of facilities (attached), showing where there are gaps in service, and how the facilities figure into the food waste recovery system.

Mr. Korot referred to the portion of the policy paper titled Demand Side, which spoke to geographical gaps. While there had been discussion that the region would have one large composting / processing facility, it's more likely that there will be several facilities accepting food waste, he said. Metro Central has been accepting food waste since 2005, (20,000 tons/year) primarily from grocery stores; most of this goes to Cedar Grove. PLC began accepting food waste about a year ago.

Transfer occurs at several locations. Nature's Needs has received approval by the state and Washington County to conduct a pilot project taking material. If Columbia Biogas receives all the necessary approvals, its estimated capacity is 45,000 tons each of commercial food waste and industrial food waste, as well as some liquids.

Dave White asked if facilities have regulated caps on how much they can take. Mr. Korot explained that at transfer stations, there is no cap on how many tons of source-separated organics can be accepted. For other types of facilities, it depends on their conditional use permits. A facility that is capped at a designated total amount can decide for themselves how to divide that cap into types of waste. The practical limitation, of course, is space.

The region's total capacity is, in theory, enough to take commercial food waste, but not commercial, residential, and yard debris combined. Existing facilities are too closely grouped to serve the entire region easily and equally. Bruce Walker mentioned that Recology is expanding its two yard debris reload facilities, and are hoping to take food waste as well. If Recology's Foster Rd. facility is thusly permitted, that will help.

Rick Winterhalter told the group that he recently visited PRC, and said that what's being taken is a lot of yard debris with food waste, but it doesn't seem to affect operations. They also have a very simple stormwater system that's been approved by DEQ. It seems that with some very simple help, other facilities could operate as successfully. Handling the residential yard waste with small amounts of food waste seems a no-brainer, he commented.

Environmental risks are about equal between yard debris and food waste, Mr. Winterhalter continued, so maybe yard debris facilities should improve their operations to take food waste, as well. Jennifer Erickson said that currently, yard debris facilities are allowed to accept a small amount of non-meat, non-dairy food waste. Dave White said he recalled that that food waste has much higher environmental risk; he requested some documentation if that's no longer the case. Leslie Kochan said that different types of organics do require different processing to minimize discharge into the stormwater system; she'll follow-up on the issue. There is a new permit for all compost facilities, whether or not they take food waste, tied in with stormwater issues. PRC's advantage, Roy Brower added, is that it's located so rurally, the land is perfect for processing and surrounded by farms; residents are somewhat used to such odors. In a more urban setting, several small facilities might better succeed.

If Metro gave financial assistance to private companies, would it be in the form of a loan or a grant, Mr. White queried. In the past, Mr. Korot replied, Metro has given grants, but a loan or other options are also possible and can be narrowed down if this option moves forward. He asked the industry representatives in the audience for their perspective. Allied Waste's Ray Phelps commented that there's a huge compost-generating capacity, but there's no commitment regarding what to do with it afterwards. The end-use needs to be discussed. Private facilities can make compost, but what's the follow-through?

Dean Kampfer of Waste Management agreed. WMO is developing processing under the assumption that DEQ is going to increase operational requirements. It's inaccurate to compare other facilities to PRC and its rural surroundings, he added. As for public facilities, they have different price structures – WMO couldn't attract material at the same rate that Metro is taking waste at Metro Central. He'd like to understand the regulatory framework, and whether small facilities would be judged at a lower regulatory level. Additionally, WMO would like to look at creating biogas rather than compost, but unless there's significant public funding, it's uncertain that they would get enough material.

Next, Mr. Korot briefly reviewed the four supply-side options in the policy paper, gleaned from SWAC's earlier choices, beginning discussion of banning commercial food waste from the system.

Mr. Winterhalter commented that at some point, a ban may become necessary in order to collect enough material. Mr. Korot asked the local government representatives if their councils would be likely to

mandate food waste collection, and whether Metro could help. The City of Portland is already piloting a project. Scott Keller said that there is interest in Beaverton, but there's a misconception that it's cheaper, and it's not, so funding is a big question. It wouldn't be hard to bring in on a voluntary basis, he's unsure how much push-back a mandate would cause.

Susan Millhauser added that Lake Oswego has a voluntary program, and Allied has given them a rate that does save businesses some money. Ray Phelps added that they've identified a little over 100 businesses in Lake Oswego that generate food waste. He explained that Allied worked with the City to solicit enlistment on a specific route. So far, support has been great. They're reducing garbage container size, which helps reduce cost. Susan said the City is supportive as long as the rate doesn't go up. Bruce Walker added that the Portland project is going well, too, and they don't set the rate. The City's program is currently voluntary, but will become a requirement once stable processing capacity is in place. For any jurisdiction, support from its Council is crucial.

Other member comments: Michelle Poyourow commented that at first blush, she's fine with the ban idea, but would like to see Metro working towards reducing the generation of materials. Ms. Kochan recalled that when DEQ was first working on pollution prevention, all large facilities had to present a plan. Perhaps a similar requirement could be used in this case. Theresa Koppang said that she's not opposed to bans if they are used as a driver. If Metro implies that a ban could be implemented in the future, it would help local governments to encourage companies to begin participating now.

Public comment:

- Local governments could give technical assistance to businesses. Mr. Korot responded that local governments are talking about adding the food waste issue into the current Recycle at Work program.
- People need to be educated about what is good for compost and what isn't.

Next steps: Mr. Korot said that the group could finish up discussion of this policy paper early in the next meeting, and address the other policy papers at that time. He asked if anyone needs more information about the upcoming items.

Ms. Poyourow commented that there's a difference between carbon pricing versus carbon taxing. She's more comfortable with carbon pricing, but is open to learning more about carbon tax. The Global Warming Commission advocates for carbon pricing, Ms. Kochan added. Ms. Poyourow moved that SWAC take language from the Commission as a policy option to discuss at the next meeting; Bruce Walker seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Millhauser asked if it's possible to look at fuel usage in this context. Mr. Korot will look into it.

Audience member Meredith Sorenson recommended a book called American Wasteland by Jonathan Bloom.

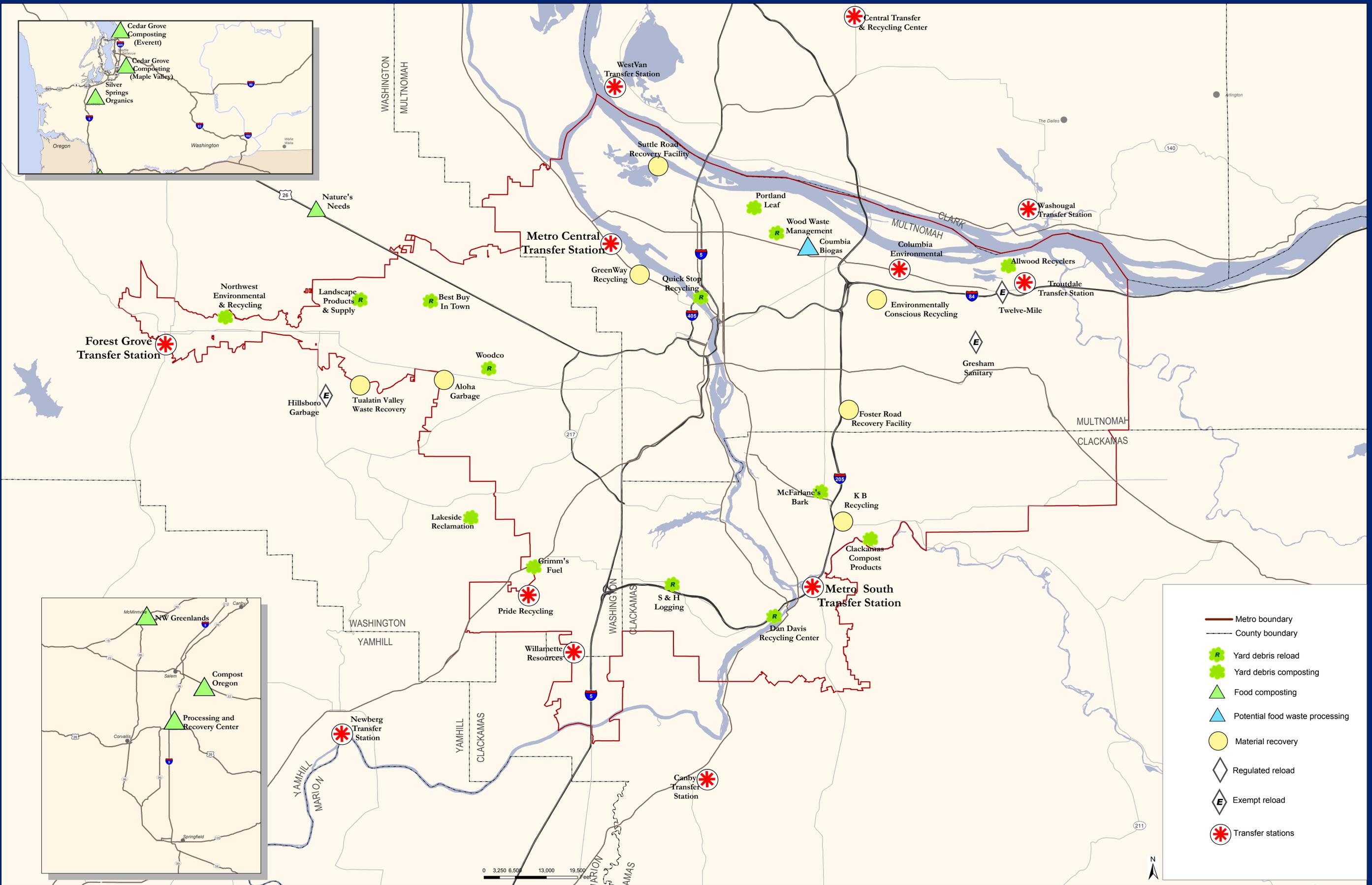
The meeting adjourned.

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Meeting Summary – Solid Waste Advisory Committee
October 21, 2010



Potential Organics Infrastructure

October 2010

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