

Chapter III

Future direction and regional policies

A. Introduction

This chapter establishes the RSWMP framework: a long-term vision for the regional solid waste management system as well as the values and policies that provide direction in years ahead.

As used in this Plan:

- The **vision** is the ultimate ideal;
- The **values** represent a set of principles held by the region that will guide and shape policies; and
- The **policies** are statements that guide programs and inform future decisions.

B. RSWMP vision

The Plan envisions a significant evolution in today's comprehensive solid waste management practices, to a future where waste is viewed as an inefficient use of resources. Through cooperation and shared responsibility among producers, consumers and government, the region will contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources to enhance our community, economy and environment for current and future generations.

C. Regional values

1. Resource conservation

Protecting the environmental quality of the region by conserving resources and reducing toxic and solid waste to ensure adequate resources for future generations.

2. Public health and safety

Ensuring sound waste management operations, eradicating illegal dumps and reducing toxic substances to maintain quality of life for the region's residents.

3. Shared responsibility

Promoting a shift away from managing products after they have become waste to instead include manufacturers and users in bearing or avoiding the costs associated with product management and disposal.

4. Life-long learning

Raising awareness among all age groups of ways to conserve resources and reduce impacts on the environment.

5. Coordination and cooperation

Addressing regional issues and developing regional programs in partnership with local government, the private sector, citizens and other key parties.

6. Performance

Emphasizing outcomes in programs and services to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

7. Access

Providing residential and commercial customers with access to information and a range of collection and facility service options.

D. Regional policies

1.0 System performance

The regional solid waste system will perform in a manner that is:

- Environmentally sound.
- Regionally balanced.
- Cost-effective.
- Adaptable to change.
- Technologically feasible.
- Acceptable to the public.

2.0 Preferred practices

Solid waste management practices will be guided by the following hierarchy:

- First, reduce the amount of solid waste generated.
- Second, reuse material for its originally intended purpose.
- Third, recycle or compost material that cannot be reduced or reused.
- Fourth, recover energy from material that cannot be reduced, reused, recycled or composted so long as the energy recovery facility preserves the quality of air, water and land resources.
- Fifth, landfill solid waste that cannot be reduced, reused, recycled, composted or from which energy cannot be recovered.

3.0 Evaluating opportunities for sustainability

Opportunities for increasing the sustainability of business practices or programs will be evaluated based on: a) technological feasibility; b) economic comparison to current practice or conditions; and c) net environmental benefits.

4.0 Recycling services provision

Recycling services will be offered as a component of residential and commercial waste collection in the region.

Recycling services will be standardized in the region to the extent possible, to minimize confusion on the part of residents and businesses and to construct cooperative promotion campaigns that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

5.0 Source separation

Source separation is the preferred approach in the region for ensuring quality secondary materials for recycling markets, but other forms of material recovery, such as post-collection separation, will not be precluded.

6.0 Market development

Enterprises that can significantly expand end-use opportunities for reuse or recycling will be fostered by the region.

7.0 New facilities

The current system of transfer stations provides reasonable access for haulers and sufficient capacity for the consolidation and transfer of solid waste to disposal facilities. New transfer stations may be considered if they provide a net benefit to the public. Factors in evaluating net benefit include capacity and access, whether the facility will be publicly or privately owned, and the impacts on material recovery and ratepayers.

Other types of new solid waste facilities shall be considered if they significantly support and are consistent with the policies of this Plan.

8.0 Facility ownership

Transfer facilities in the regional solid waste system may be publicly or privately owned. The public interest is best served by continued public sector facility ownership in the system. Public ownership ensures a comprehensive range of services are accessible to regional customers at equitable and affordable rates.

9.0 Facility siting

Appropriate zoning in each city or county will utilize clear and objective standards that do not effectively prohibit solid waste facilities.

10.0 System regulation

Solid waste facilities accepting waste generated within the region will be regulated to ensure they are operated in an acceptable manner and are consistent with the policies of this Plan. All facilities performing post-collection material recovery shall meet minimum recovery requirements. Regulatory control will be implemented through a system of franchises, contracts, public ownership, and licenses.

Government regulation will ensure protection of the environment and the public interest, but not unnecessarily restrict the operation of private solid waste businesses.

11.0 Host community enhancement

Any community hosting a solid waste “disposal site” as defined by ORS 459.280 shall be entitled to a Metro-collected fee to be used for the purpose of community enhancement.

12.0 Disposal pricing

Charges for disposal services shall be sufficiently transparent to allow regulators to judge whether such charges are fair, acceptable, and reasonably related to the costs of services received.

The establishment of charges for disposal services at publicly owned facilities shall balance cost recovery, revenue adequacy, and adopted regulations and policies, including the policies and objectives of this Plan. In addition, such charges shall be structured to ensure that the public sector is able to meet its long-term obligations such as investments, debt, contracts, and fixed costs undertaken by the public sector on behalf of the public.

Charges to residents of the Metro district who may not be direct users of the disposal system should be related to other benefits received.

To the extent possible, rate adjustments will be predictable and orderly to allow affected parties to perform effective planning.

High level vs. ground level direction

The vision, values, and policies presented in this Chapter provide the framework for guiding solid waste management decisions, programs, practices, and system performance in the region. The goals and objectives that follow in the next two chapters constitute much of the “work plan” for the decade ahead, and are consistent with this framework.