

Protecting the environment at Future Metro South

April 2021

Metro's commitment to clean water and air

From restoring wildlife habitat to reducing the environmental impact of waste, Metro works every day to protect what people love about living in greater Portland.

Metro is planning to build a new, state-of-the-art facility to complement and expand the garbage and recycling services currently offered at the Metro South Transfer Station. The new facility will also provide living-wage jobs and potentially serve as a community gathering and education space.

Currently, Metro staff are conducting technical studies and gathering community feedback about a site on Jennifer St. in the Clackamas Industrial Area. This information will help determine if the property is an appropriate place for a new, modern transfer station.

Whatever decision is made about the property purchase, Metro will ensure its commitment to clean water and air is reflected in the design and operations of any new facility.

Protecting drinking water and wildlife habitat

Metro currently owns and operates two public transfer stations – Metro South, located in Oregon City, and Metro Central, located in Portland. Metro is committed to responsible environmental stewardship at both of these locations. The sites are fully permitted and meet all current requirements to keep pollution out of waterways and the soil. Both sites include design features to protect the environment from pollution and hazards, and staff are fully trained in emergency response.

What is a transfer station?

Garbage and recycling haulers, community members, and businesses bring waste to transfer stations to be sorted and then taken off site. Waste stays at the facility for about a day before going to its final destination – often a recycling or composting facility or the landfill.



Metro's Blue Lake Regional Park

Any new facility would meet the following requirements:

- Solid waste and industrial stormwater permits and a stormwater pollution control plan
- An industrial waste water discharge permit and an accidental spill protection plan
- A spill prevention, control and countermeasure plan
- Maintenance of trees and other vegetation along streams to protect water quality and wildlife habitat

Specific features to prevent water runoff and protect the environment in case of a natural disaster will be evaluated during the design process, but could include:

- Underground cisterns that collect runoff to be reused or released into the sewage system
- Bioswales (channels and ditches that are often landscaped) and rain gardens that collect and filter water
- Mechanical treatment systems that separate out oil and bind metals for disposal

The design process will also include engaging with interested community members and organizations to identify what work is needed to further safeguard water and protect wildlife habitat at the Jennifer St. location.

A sustainable facility

At a minimum, the new transfer center will be built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification standards, in line with Metro's Green Building Policy. Designing the facility so that it meets a more comprehensive certification – the Core Green Building Certification, verified by the International Living Future Institute – is also under consideration.

Specific water-related requirements for Core Green Building certification include minimizing wasted water and not using drinkable water in the operations of the facility whenever possible. Features to meet these requirements could include capturing rainwater on site to use for toilets, irrigation and cleaning.

Other green features – such as locally sourced and/or high-recycled content construction materials, LED lighting, efficient heating and cooling systems, and ways to generate solar energy onsite – will be considered in the facility's design.



Factoria Transfer Station

A model for sustainability

Located in King County, WA, the Factoria Transfer Station is certified LEED Gold. It uses 40% less energy than similar facilities and saves 1.3 million gallons of drinkable water every year.

The project's construction materials included 33% post-industrial or post-consumer recycled content, and 34% of the materials used were sourced from within 500 miles of the site. More than 90% of the wood used in permanent features was certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.



Seattle North Transfer Station education center

Building connections with nature

Locating a facility at the property under consideration will offer opportunities to highlight community connections to the river and open spaces in the area.

Metro will collaborate with community members – prioritizing communities of color, youth, Indigenous communities and people closest to the site – to identify ways to make those connections relevant and meaningful.

The facility will be at a higher elevation than the Clackamas River, and a natural buffer of trees and vegetation exists between the river and the property area. These natural features mean that the center could offer views of area wildlife, as well as the river, Carli Creek and Mt. Hood – providing direct connections between the natural world and everyday actions people can take to reduce waste, recycle and protect the environment.

Existing outdoor recreation opportunities in the area will also be important considerations during the design process. For example, preserving natural views for people who use the river will be a priority. Other ways to connect people with nature, including access to future planned trails or greenways, will also be explored.