



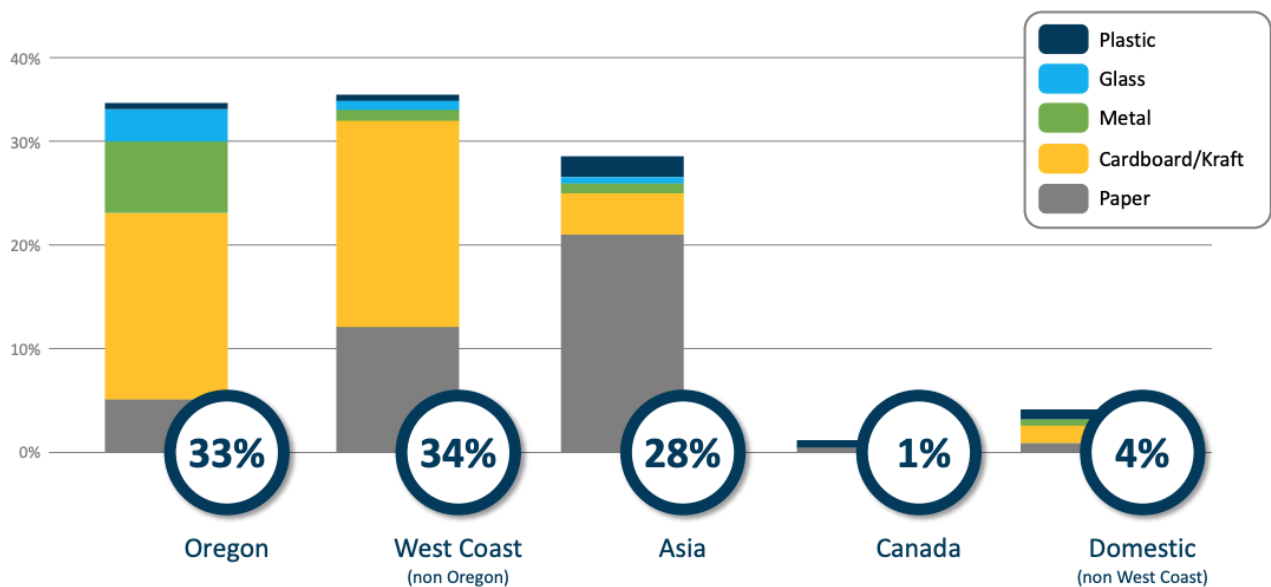
Recycled Materials Destination Data

A key goal of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan is to manage recycling more responsibly to ensure that recyclable material is sorted in ways that minimize negative environmental impacts for people and the planet, both in greater Portland and around the world.

When the 2030 Regional Waste Plan (RWP) was adopted, one of the first action items was to collect baseline data to help Metro, stakeholders and partners improve the region’s recycling practices. Starting in 2019, Material Recovery Facilities licensed by Metro were required to submit a limited amount of information about where materials they sorted were sent.

2019 key findings highlight areas for improvement

Metro staff have identified key areas for improvement, especially the need to reduce the amount of recycling sent to countries with facilities that may not be equipped to responsibly recycle.



Notes:

- Due to rounding the sum of the destinations may not equal 100%
- Approximately 600 tons (less than 1%) of paper was sent to an international location country not located in Asia.

Initial data shows that at least 28% of all recycling materials processed by regional Material Recovery Facilities are sent directly to destinations in Asia, including 54% of all paper recycling (1% sent to China) and 40% of all plastic recyclables (6% sent to China). For plastic, this equates to enough material to fill 1,800 semi-trailer trucks – lined up end-to-end they would stretch for 23 miles (Portland to Forest Grove).



The true percentage of recycling products being sent abroad could be higher since the data collected by Metro needs more assessment and auditing. Additionally, the data only reflects the first step in the process for many materials, which may be bought and sold multiple times before its further sorted or processed for recycling.

Modernizing our recycling system

This spring, Metro started taking a deep look at current industry best practices and regional conditions in order to develop additional quality and reporting requirements for how the region's recyclable materials are managed. Improving Metro's quality and reporting requirements will help ensure that the region's recyclable materials management system is more transparent, adaptable, accountable and aligned with Metro's values of responsible recycling, good jobs and a diverse solid waste system workforce. Data collected as part of this process can also inform future standards that build more equity into Metro's recycling system so that workers – like those who sort recyclable materials– have safer working conditions and living wages.

This process to develop more robust quality and reporting requirements for the Metro region solid waste system will help inform broader efforts to modernize Oregon's recycling system, including the Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act SB 582 adopted by the Oregon Legislature in 2021. This new law modernizes Oregon's outdated recycling system using an approach that includes producers, governments, and the recycling industry. Additional information is available on DEQ's website: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/recycling/Pages/Modernizing-Oregons-Recycling-System.aspx>

Learn more!

Additional information about the 2030 Regional Waste plan is available on Metro's website <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/regional-waste-plan>

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