

Local Government Roundtable Summary

Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan

Metro hosted a roundtable on October 31, 2022 to seek input from local government partners. The focus of this meeting was to identify infrastructure or facilities needed to support garbage, recycling, reuse, repair, recycling, and composting services in the greater Portland region. The following is a high-level summary of the discussion.



Location of current facilities

- People who live in Washington County and east Multnomah County must travel far to access a public transfer station, or any transfer station in some cases. The private transfer stations in Washington County are more costly for the public to use.
- People who live in Washington County and parts of Clackamas County have less or no convenient access to household hazardous waste, and reuse/repair services.
- Even if a transfer station or collection facility was built in Cornelius (on site purchased by Metro), cities in the southern parts of Washington County (King City, Tigard, Sherwood) would still face access disparities.
- Illegal dumping of garbage is an issue for communities throughout the region, and illegal dumping of household hazardous waste is especially concerning. More garbage facilities with more equitable access could help reduce these issues.

Who can access current facilities

- There are serious gaps around equity, including barriers for black, indigenous, and people of color, people living with low incomes and non-English speakers in accessing self-haul and special collection services. Seniors, people with limited mobility, and those living unhoused face barriers to accessing self-haul opportunities.

- Variance of fees and service levels between public and private transfer stations is of great concern. Higher costs or lack of services creates access barriers for disposal of household hazardous waste, recycling and bulky waste.
- Multifamily residents lack easy access to food waste and bulky item collection.

Strengthening our partnerships, regionwide

- Coordination is needed around holiday closures at collection facilities when franchised haulers continue operating and waste gets backed-up.
- More community clean-up events are needed for household hazardous waste and hard-to-dispose-of items. Some local governments have had success with an annual community-wide cleanup day.
- Industrial land availability is limited throughout the Metro region, and this could pose a challenge to building new garbage and recycling facilities.

Other gaps

- Disasters and emergencies like fires and storms create additional waste and hinder collection. This creates additional costs and accumulation, which especially burdens people with low incomes.
- More education is needed about accessing the waste and recycling system, especially for increasing awareness of available services and events, and for people speaking different languages.

Small Group Discussions

Participants were broken into eight small groups to discuss:

- How well do community-identified gaps align with your understanding about what is needed in your jurisdiction to better manage reuse, repair, recycling, composting and garbage? What additional facility or service gaps do you see?
- How do the gaps impact your community? Who benefits from current facilities, who is left out or burdened? Are there nuances or unique needs (based on geography, demographics, land use, etc.) specific to your jurisdiction? How might these efforts align with your agency's values and priorities?

Washington County

- Primary issue is access; physically and economically. Seniors with mobility issues, multifamily residents, and people with low incomes have the highest needs. Another barrier is language.
- Equity is a big issue. Need to communicate with all communities and not burden marginalized communities as changes are made.
- Should work with all levels of government to move forward more quickly.
- Any look at rate increases needs to be transparent to share with community members.
- Western area: need access to an affordable nearby facility due to higher fees at private transfer stations.
- Southern area: No easy access to a facility, for some the closest is in Newberg.
- Are there alternative ways of providing service (e.g. full scale facility vs. accessible collection

events or a network of smaller facilities)?

- Concern for lack of household hazardous waste collection and environmental impacts of improper disposal.
- Household hazardous waste events happen in the area, but they aren't advertised broadly because they are in high-demand already (too popular). This means some cities never hear about these events, like Durham.
- Ridwell and Pride have started filling some of the recycling service gaps.
- Reuse/repair infrastructure is not as developed on the Westside as it is in Portland, which has organizations like the Rebuilding Center. A hub and spoke model for reuse/repair would be beneficial on the west side.

Multnomah County

- Gresham and other East County cities have similar access needs as Washington County.
- There's a need for more communication about holiday facility closures and hours. Some private facilities close on holidays when haulers still operate.
- There's a yard debris/food waste gap for people who live in multifamily housing.
- Need more household hazardous waste events.
- Need disaster planning and coordination among collection facilities during a natural disaster event.
- The garbage doesn't stop for heat, fire or ice emergencies; the people most burdened have low incomes, are not able bodied, or lack transportation.
- Limited access to reuse/repair options.

- Equity concerns for Black, Indigenous, people of color and woman owned companies that collect bulky waste; can needs be aligned to not burden small companies?
- Are depots needed for recycling or should there be expansion of collection services?

Clackamas County

- Existing system, works well for people that have time and money. Low-income and multi-family residents that need self-haul, special collection services, or want to access reuse are not served well.
- Gaps include: reuse/repair options, consistent route efficiency, sustainable funding for reuse, equitable rate setting to pay for services and extended producer responsibility models that include cost of collection.
- Multifamily residents have some of the biggest gaps in service; storage and access for garbage is not adequate at most multi-family residences.
- Ridwell is currently filling some system gaps. Could private companies open depots around the region?
- Concern about rates and the amount of profit that franchise companies are guaranteed.
- There is inconsistent residential food scrap collection service.
- Need to align the system to better support material recovery and reduce waste.
- Clean-up, collection and bulky waste days are popular and should continue; add household hazardous waste to events.
- Other needs include: more Paint-care locations; disaster planning for garbage service; removal of abandoned RVs; ways to get rid of Styrofoam; more support for illegal dumping.