

# Metro Garbage & Recycling System Facilities Plan

## Phase 3 engagement summary report

### Phase 3 overview

Metro is developing a Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan. This project will assess the current public, private, and non-profit garbage, recycling and reuse infrastructure in the region. The work will identify the places where people lack services, and present potential plans for future investments in new facilities or new services.

This report summarizes engagement activities during Phase 3 of the project, which began in March 2023. During Phase 3, the team engaged with stakeholders from local government, industry, reuse and repair organizations and businesses, sovereign Tribal Governments, Metro Council, Metro staff and advisory committees, as well as community members with diverse identities and lived experience. Engagement activities focused on developing and reviewing scenarios to address identified service gaps.

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- Phase 3 overview
- Engagement activities
- What we learned
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### Engagement activities

Engagement activities in Phase 3 focused on an in-person symposium, held in September 2023, that brought together stakeholders from different sectors to learn about and discuss draft scenarios. Phase 3 engagement activities also preceded the symposium, which helped inform development of scenarios, and followed the symposium to gain additional input.

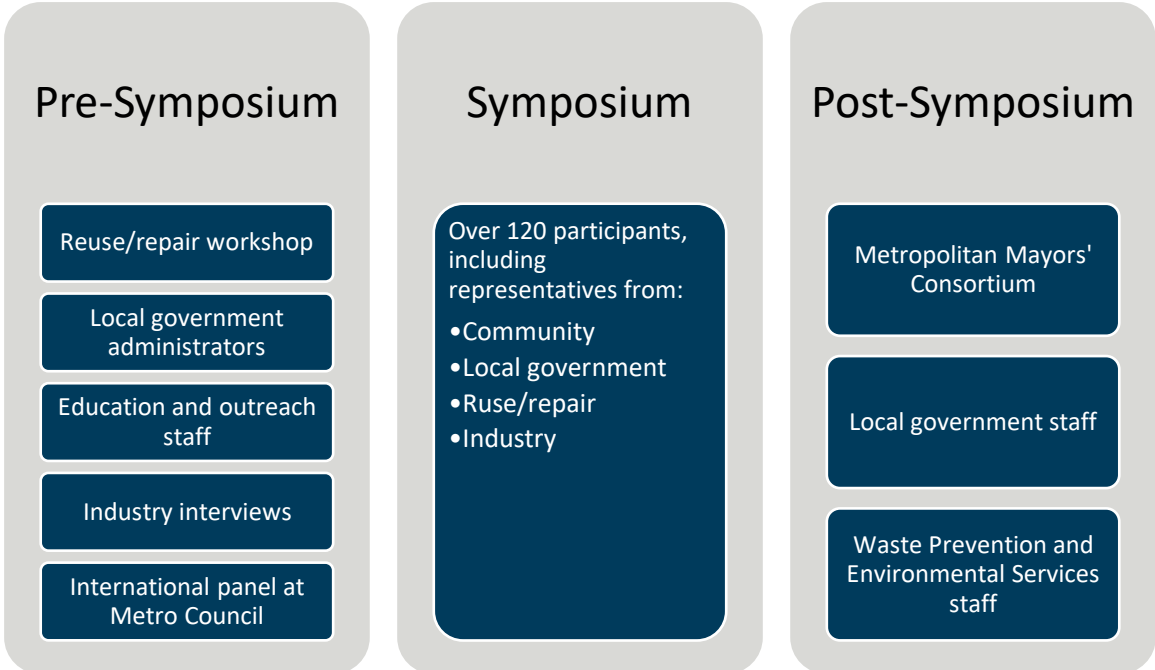


Figure 1. Phase 3 engagement activities at a glance

## Pre-symposium

### **Reuse/Repair Planning Workshop (March 2023)**

Leaders in the reuse and repair space were invited to follow-up on an initial roundtable meeting held as part of the project's Phase 2 engagement activities. The meeting discussion focused on ways Metro could help fill facility gaps and support the reuse sector in the future. Input was used to identify a range of solutions to include in the scenarios.

### **Local Government Administrators Workgroup (March 2023)**

In partnership with the WPES Recycling Modernization Act (RMA) team, Metro staff asked local government staff what role they would like to play in managing future recycling depots. This discussion informed scenario options. Under the RMA, producers will be required to establish a minimum of 42 collection points in the greater Portland tri-county area at recycling depots and other locations. There is an opportunity to leverage the RMA with goals and aspirations of the System Facilities Plan by expanding and/or building depots or facilities that collect multiple materials in one place, not just those covered by the RMA.

### **Regional Education and Outreach Retreat (March 2023)**

Attended by local government and regional education and outreach staff, this retreat included a topic on current barriers to accelerating community reuse and repair and ways the System Facilities Plan could address these challenges. This discussion informed scenario options.

### **Industry interviews (May and June 2023)**

The project team conducted one-on-one interviews with owners and managers of garbage and recycling businesses in the Metro region. Questions explored the facilities they currently operate and any near-term investments or changes they expect to make, their business' preferred role in the regional system, their perspective on Metro's role and what they think Metro should do more or less of, and their experience and interest in public/private partnerships.

## Symposium (September 2023)

The Reuse, Recycling, and Garbage System Symposium consisted of an international panel, followed by an interactive workshop to review the four draft scenarios (Figure 2). The scenarios were assessed using evaluation criteria developed in Phase 2 of the project and presented to workshop participants, following the [Workshop Discussion Guide](#). The scenarios represent different ways of responding to the gaps identified through engagement and technical analysis.





Baseline	Full-Service	Distributed	No-Build
			
Metro does not build new facilities or address facility gaps, but maintains current facilities	Metro builds four large transfer stations and two new reuse facilities	Metro builds a network of distributed mid-sized facilities across the three counties	Metro increases requirements, invests in private facilities and renovates existing facilities

Figure 2. Draft scenarios considered during the symposium.

Input from workshop participants was collected through written comments submitted during table discussions. Workshop participants were asked to complete an online survey at the end of the workshop and the survey link was provided via email after the event. A total of 50 workshop participants provided input through the survey. The survey responses are associated with respondent roles.

Overall, over 120 people participated in the symposium, including representatives from the community, local government, reuse/repair organization, WPES staff members, and the Metropolitan Mayors’ Consortium.

## Post-symposium

### Online survey

The project team continued to use the survey first deployed to collect additional input through engagement activities after the symposium between October 2023 and January 2024. The self-reported roles of all survey respondents, including those who completed the survey through engagement activities after the symposium, are shown in Table 1.

The online survey was designed as a high-context engagement tool and administered along with a presentation and discussion guide. These materials provided details about the different scenarios including a high-level summary of the technical analysis for each. The survey was not designed to yield statistical significance or to collect a representative sample of system users across the region. The survey was successful at achieving the goal of gathering focused and informed feedback from key stakeholder groups and from participating Tribes who requested community member engagement to help inform a preferred scenario which could encompass attributes of multiple alternatives presented.

Community	15
Reuse/Repair	15
Private Industry	18
Local Government	20
Metro Staff	54
Workshop with Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians tribal members	10

Table 1. Survey respondent roles

### **Waste prevention and environmental services staff Q&A sessions and survey (October 2023)**

Program and policy staff, as well as frontline staff working at Metro transfer stations, MetroPaint, and the RID Deployment Center were invited to provide input on the scenarios. Engagement opportunities included two Q&A sessions hosted by project staff and an opportunity to take the same survey as symposium participants.

### **Local government policy table (October and November 2023)**

Discussion of the scenarios also took place at the local government policy table. The purpose of this forum is to discuss policy and system finance topics that are under consideration by Metro Council and will be discussed by the Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) or the Metropolitan Planning Advisory Group (MPAC) with local government representatives.

### **Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Portland Area Office and members' workshop (January 2024)**

This was a virtual workshop organized in collaboration with staff from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (CTSI) Portland Area Office. CTSI members who live in the greater Portland area heard an overview of the System Facilities Plan scenarios from project staff. Among other things, participants discussed their interest in understanding the potential impacts of different types of facilities on the environment and human health, particularly for communities of color and low-income communities; and expressed a desire for Metro to do more to address plastic pollution, create stronger incentives for recycling and work closely with the state on implementation of the RMA. Workshop participants were asked to take the same survey as symposium participants.

### **Community-based organizations**

The Metro project team made presentations to community members convened by Adelante Mujeres and Unite Oregon in January 2024. The Adelante workshop was held in Spanish and the Unite Oregon workshop was held in English with simultaneous interpretation into Spanish. Participants shared feedback about the scenarios and the ways they wanted to be involved in the future of the system.

### **Ongoing engagement**

#### **Community Advisory Group**

Metro convened community members who represent diverse viewpoints and experiences to advise on the System Facilities Plan as it is being developed. The group is helping to advance racial equity in the development of the plan, identify service gaps, and advise on the benefits and impacts of future facilities and services. The advisory group met six times in Phase 3, including for a facility tour.

#### **Metro advisory committees**

Updates were provided at meetings of the Regional Waste Advisory Committee, Committee on Racial Equity and the Metropolitan Policy Advisory Committee.

#### **Tribal government consultation**

Project staff and Metro's Tribal Affairs program invited consultation and engagement with seven tribal governments starting in Fall 2022. Metro staff have continued to explore interest in the project with Tribes and provided project updates and presentations as requested. Staff will continue to invite engagement in the plan development, scenario(s) selection and future implementation with interested Tribes.

## Metro Council

Members of the Metro Council had an opportunity to hear directly from international panel members and ask questions during the panel discussion as well as participate in the symposium in September 2023. Council members also participated in tours of local reuse businesses as part of the symposium. In addition, staff presented at a Council work session to review draft scenarios, ask questions and provide input on preferred scenario elements in November 2023.

## What we learned

### Symposium workshop and survey

- Workshop participants indicated the most support for components included in the Distributed (public facilities that include reuse and recycling centers) and No-build (fee to invest in reuse businesses) scenarios.
- Most survey respondents (62%) said they would make changes to the preferred scenario they selected.
- Participants also showed substantial support for new reuse and repair facilities, and a role for Metro in providing space and investment to support organizations offering reuse and repair.
  - Across groups, there was support for including reuse and recycling services at public facilities.
  - As a group, private industry participants were also supportive of Metro investing in private facilities.
- Many comments indicated an important role for Metro in providing education and outreach, and that this work is needed to support changes to the reuse, recycling and garbage system.
- Symposium participants were supportive of closing gaps in access through new transfer stations in Washington County and East Multnomah County.
- Metro's use of regulatory tools is not favored by most participants, especially the mandatory subscription to curbside service. Regulating rates that private facilities charge was only moderately supported.
- Metro building new full-service transfer stations was not well supported by many participants apart from Metro staff, 50% of whom supported the Full-Service scenario. There is more support among survey participants overall for mid-sized facilities.
- Concern about costs: participants did not support large new costs for customers, and some asked for more information about how cost estimates were developed or questioned their accuracy.
- A full report on workshop findings is included as an appendix to this engagement summary.

### Community representatives

The Community Advisory Group and other community members engaged are largely supportive of Metro investing in reuse facilities such as the reuse hub and reuse mall and developing new mid-sized transfer stations. Other key themes include the importance of addressing access issues by closing geographic gaps in facility locations for residential self-haul customers and adding additional materials and services through curbside collection. Responses from community representatives are summarized in the figures below.

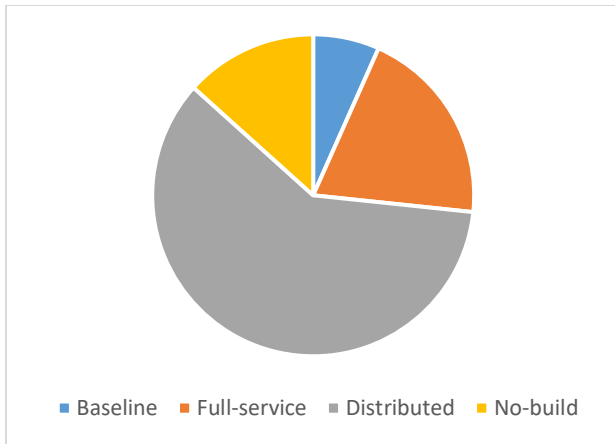


Figure 3. Preferred scenarios, community representatives (n=15)

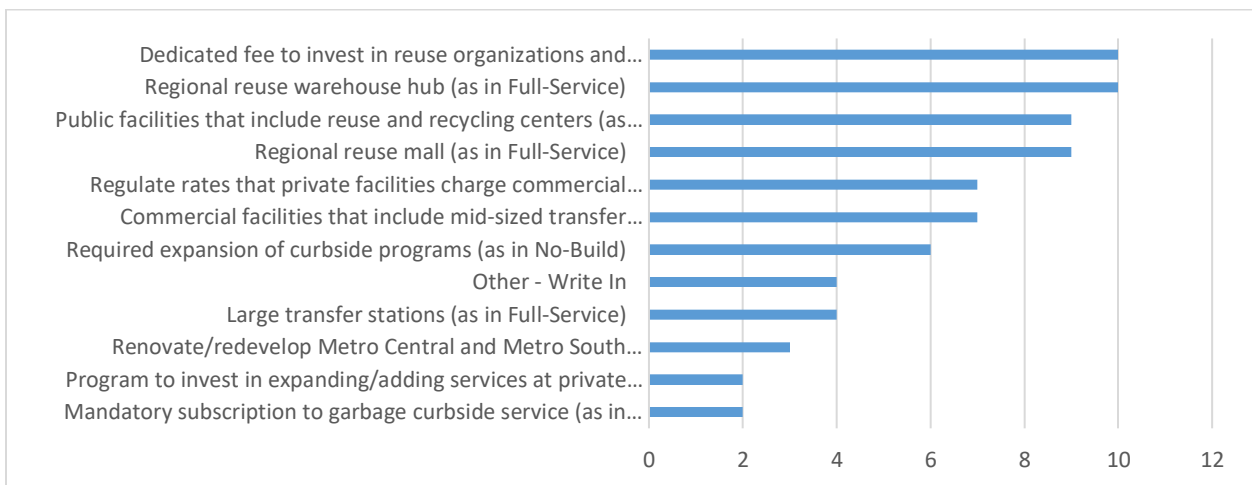


Figure 4. Preferred scenario components, community representatives (n=15)

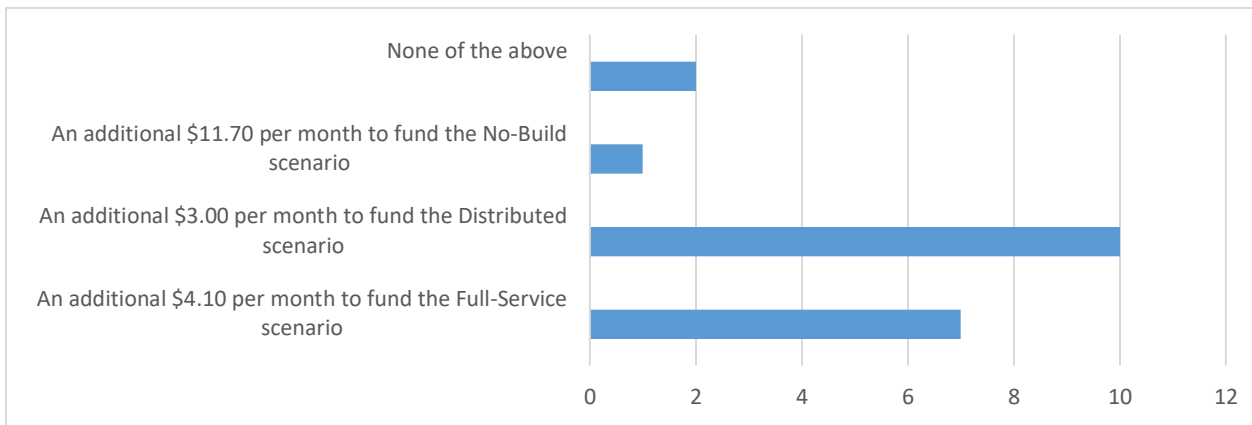


Figure 5. Cost preferences, community representatives (n=15)

Comments from the Community Advisory Group indicated it's also important to address resilience and safety of existing Metro transfer stations. Members of this group commented that new transfer station facilities, as described in the Full-Service and Distributed scenarios, will provide more and better services, and there's a role for Metro in owning these facilities so that they are subject to Metro's green

building policies and labor agreements. Comments also indicated support for maintaining tonnage allocations for Metro transfer stations.

### Reuse and repair organizations

Stakeholders from reuse and repair organizations and businesses also indicated strong support for incorporating reuse and repair into Metro facilities and emphasized the need for transportation access to facilities. They largely supported investment in their organizations. Concerns from reuse organizations in developing new facilities for reuse and repair were about increased dumping of non-useable materials, and about how financing, procurement processes and contracts would meet their needs. Responses from these group members are summarized in the figures below.

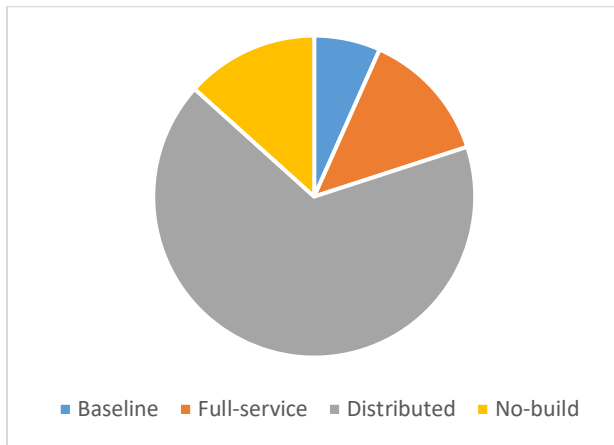


Figure 6. Preferred scenarios, reuse and repair organizations (n=16)

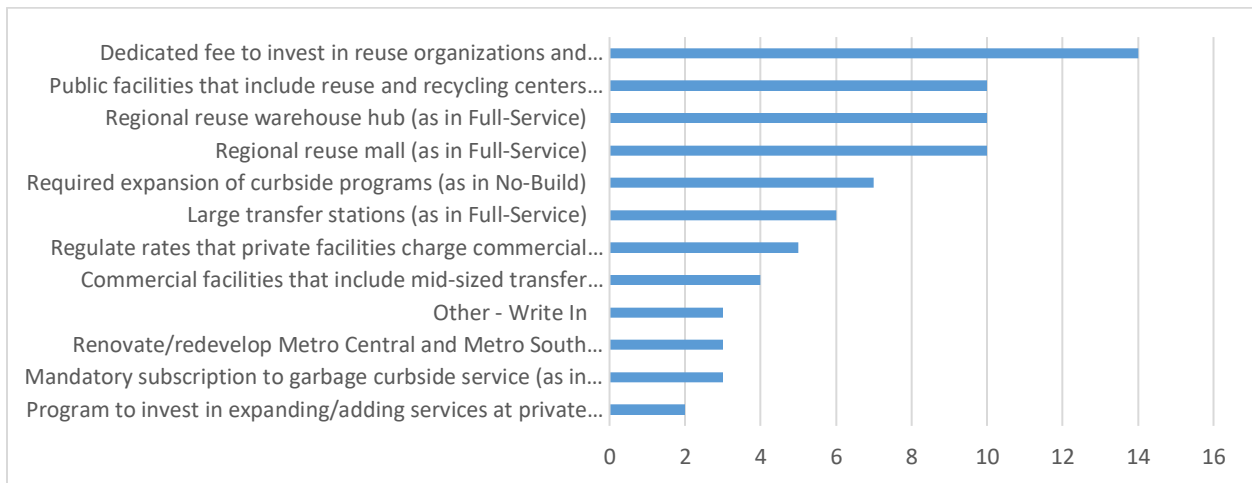


Figure 7. Preferred scenario components, reuse and repair organizations (n=16)

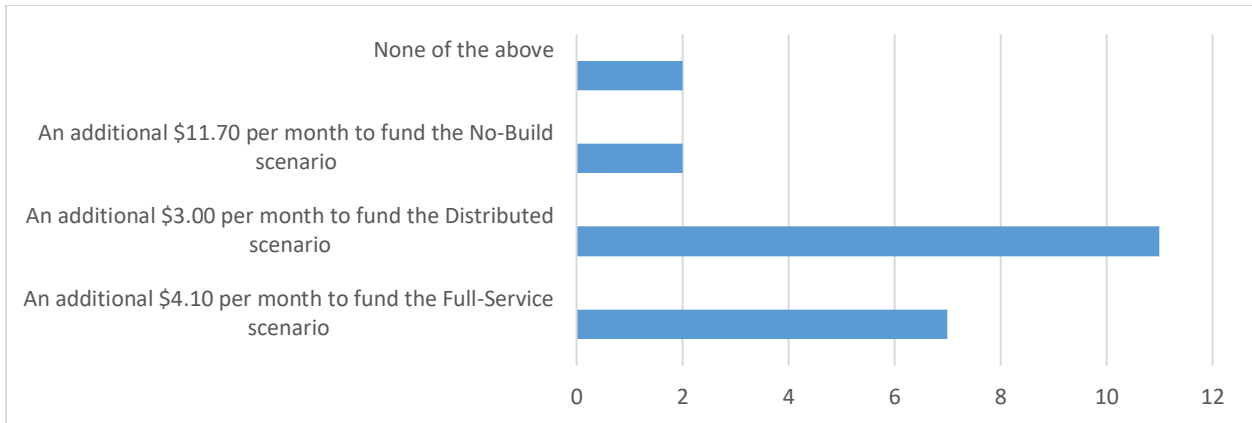


Figure 8. Cost preferences, reuse and repair organizations (n=16)

### Private industry

Some private transfer station and material recovery facility operators said they prefer to focus on commercial rather than residential self-haul customers, while some said they are open to accepting additional materials streams where markets and volumes can be counted on. They suggested Metro continue to focus on providing self-haul and household hazardous waste services. Members of this group indicated concern about increased disposal fees. Some said they would like to retain tonnage allocations or gain more tonnage to make future investments. Transfer station operators do not want Metro to regulate disposal fees charged by private facilities. Some are interested in public financing options to expand, and there's interest in opening new private facilities including to handle garbage from the general public. Responses from these group members are summarized in the figures below.

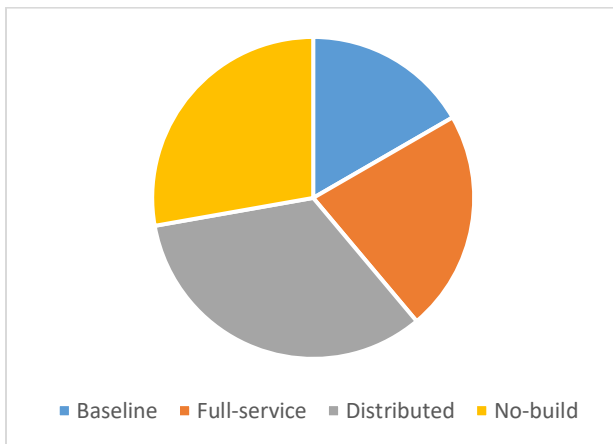


Figure 9. Preferred scenarios, private industry (n=18)



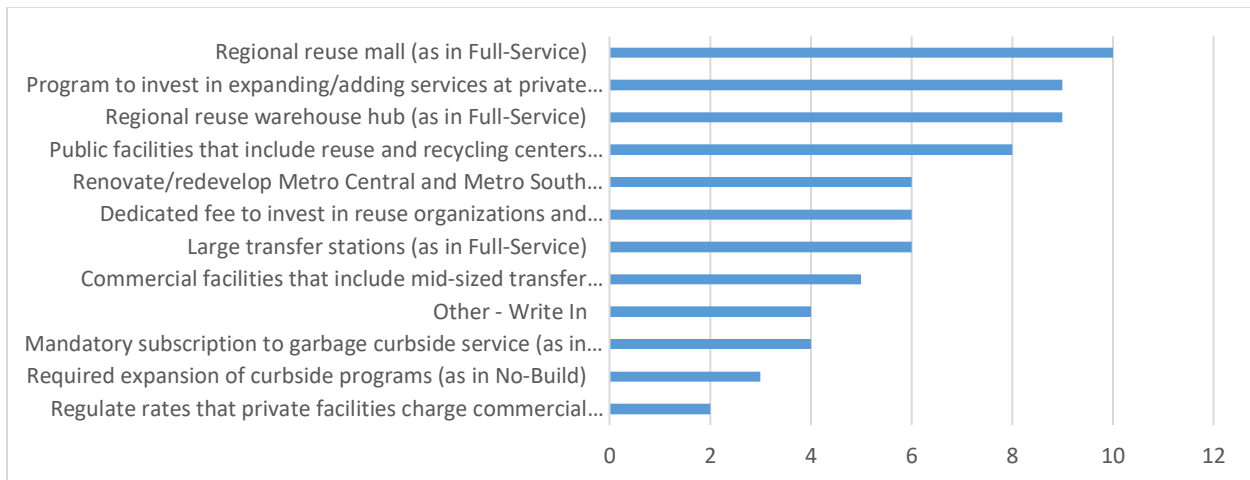


Figure 10. Preferred scenario components, private industry (n=18)

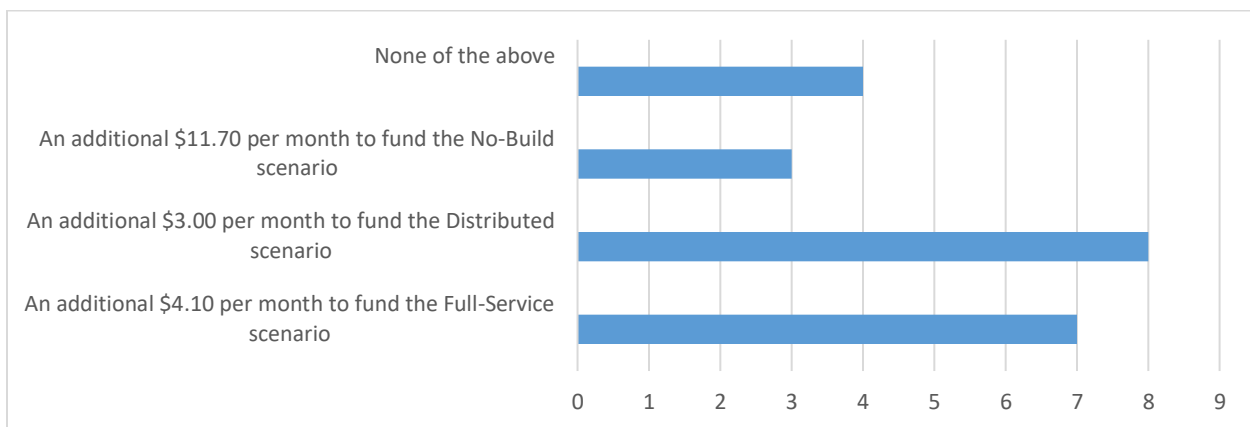


Figure 11. Cost preferences, private industry (n=18)

### Local governments

Local government administrators indicated they would like to partner with Metro on new recycling depots through the Recycling Modernization Act (RMA) that would accept multiple materials. Survey respondents from local governments indicated:

- Strong support for public facilities that include reuse and recycling centers.
- Moderate support for Metro developing new mid-sized transfer stations, reuse malls or reuse hubs.
- Moderate support for regulating rates that private facilities charge commercial customers
- Low support for mandatory expansion of curbside programs.

Responses from these group members are summarized in the figures below.

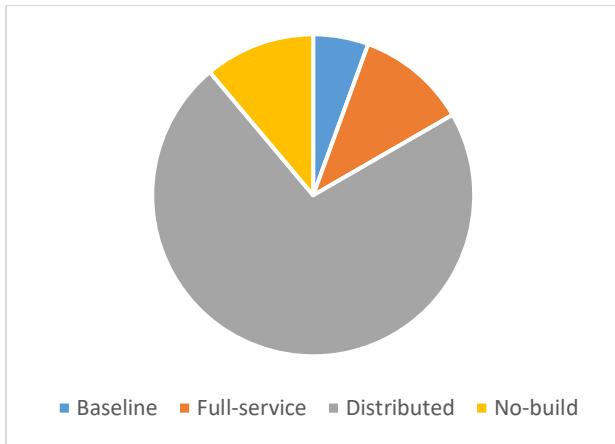


Figure 12. Preferred scenarios, local governments (n=20)

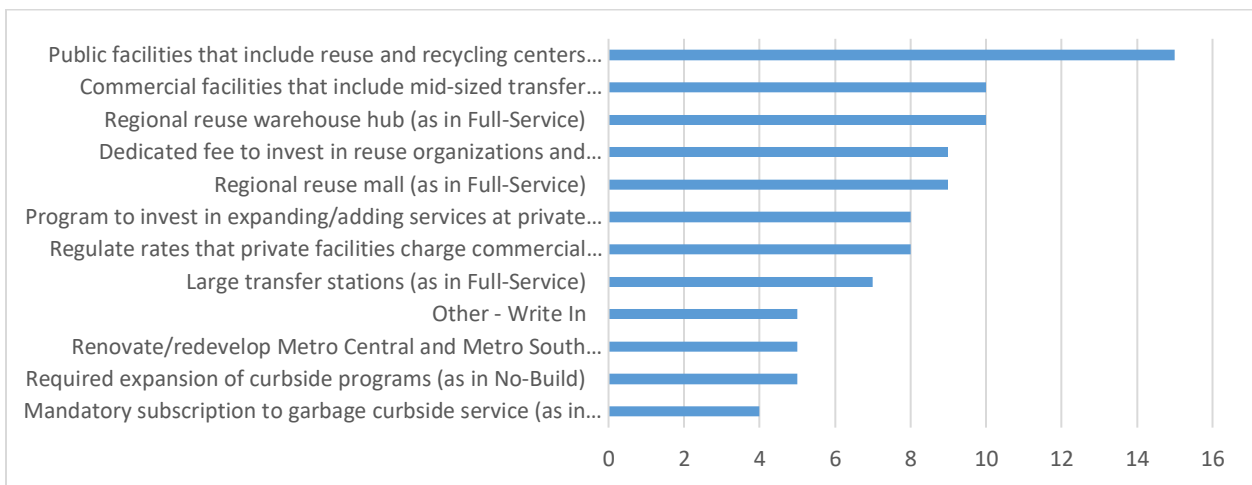


Figure 13. Preferred scenario components, local governments (n=20)

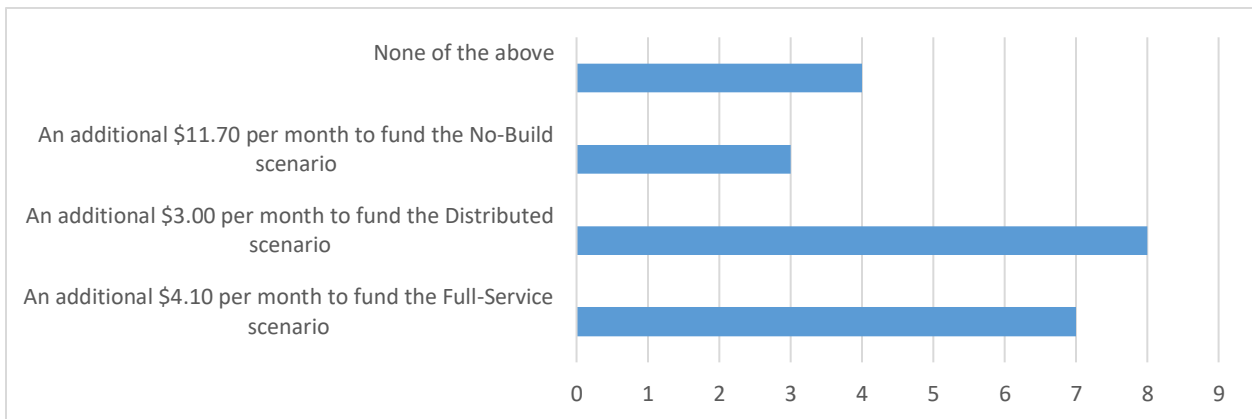


Figure 14. Cost preferences, local governments (n=20)

### Metro staff

Frontline workers at Metro South and Metro Central transfer stations, household hazardous waste facilities, MetroPaint and RID Patrol see the benefits of and barriers that exist at facilities daily. In the survey, which also included planning and policy staff members along with frontline workers, the group

indicated strong support for public facilities that include reuse and recycling centers, as well as for the reuse warehouse hub and reuse mall. They indicated low support for mandatory subscription to curbside service. Responses from these group members are summarized in the figures below.

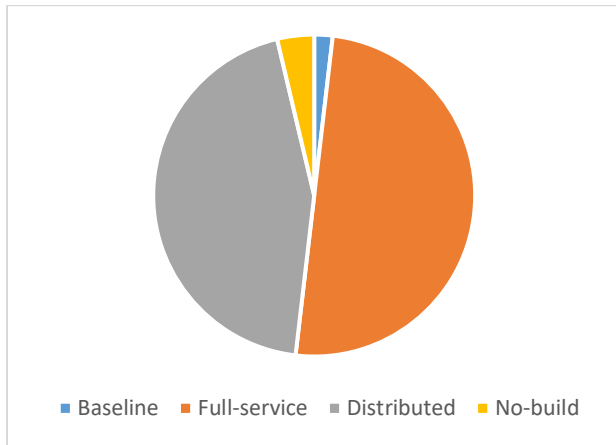


Figure 15. Preferred scenarios, Metro staff (n=54)

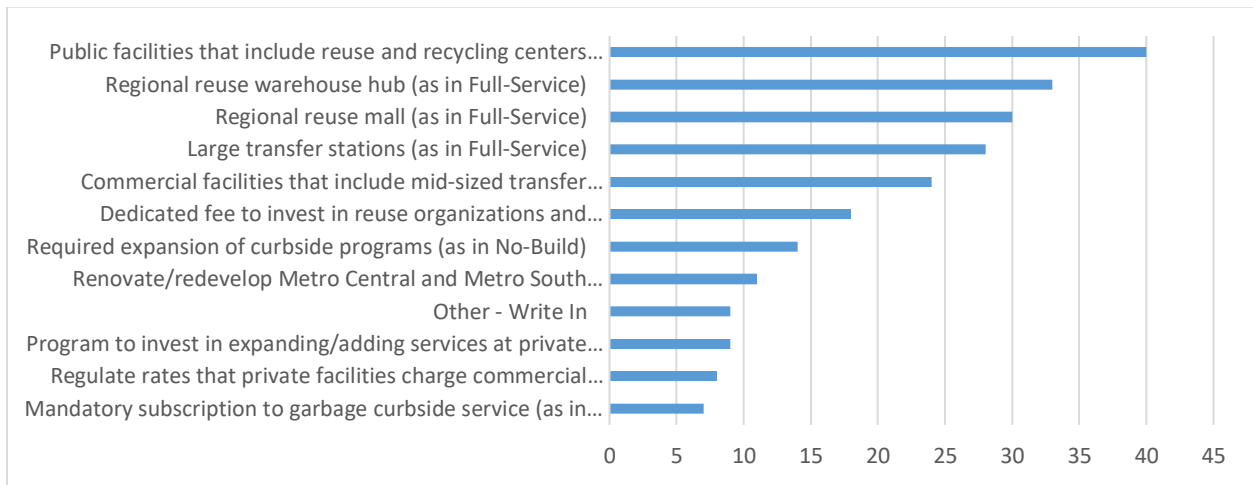


Figure 16. Preferred scenario components, Metro staff (n=54)

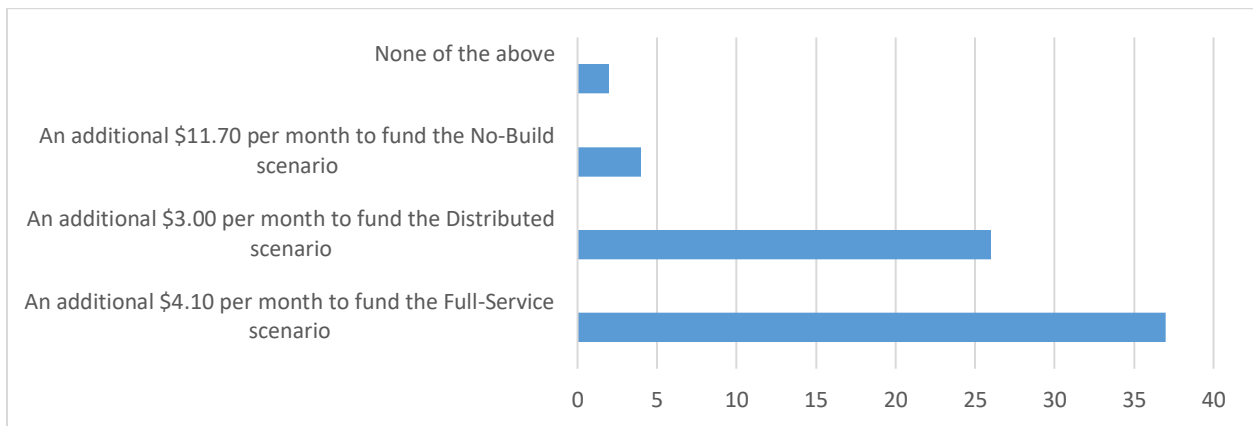


Figure 17. Cost preferences, Metro staff (n=54)

### Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Portland Area Office

Ten members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians who completed the survey after receiving an overview of the project and the scenarios indicated a high level of support for the reuse mall concept. This group also supported the highest level of investment among all survey groups. Responses from these group members are summarized in the figures below.

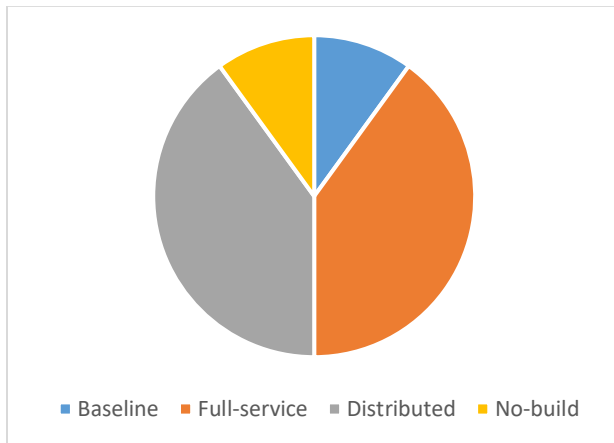


Figure 18. Preferred scenarios, Siletz Portland area office (n=10)

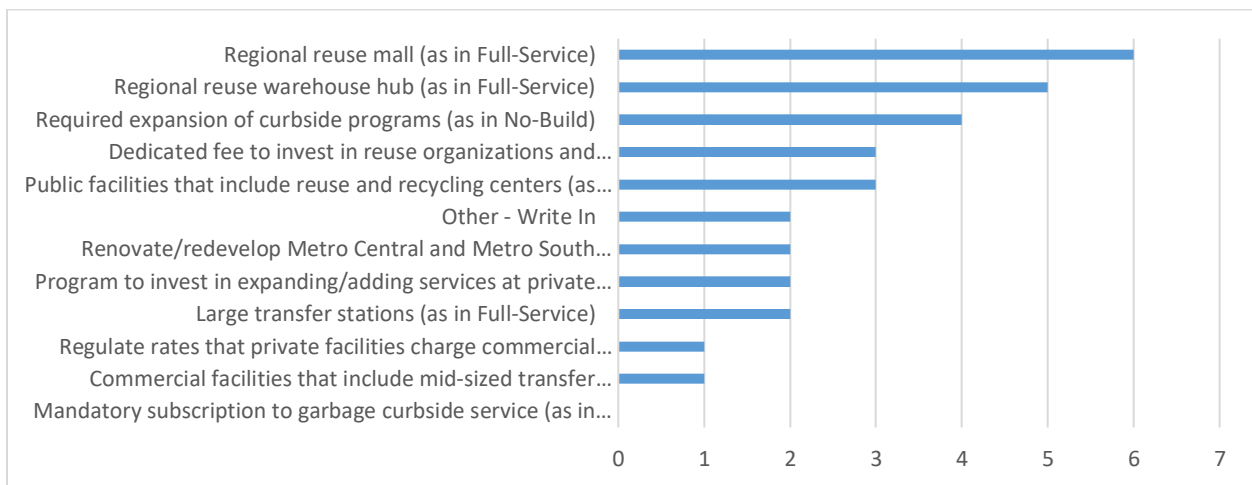


Figure 19. Preferred scenario components, Siletz Portland area office (n=10)

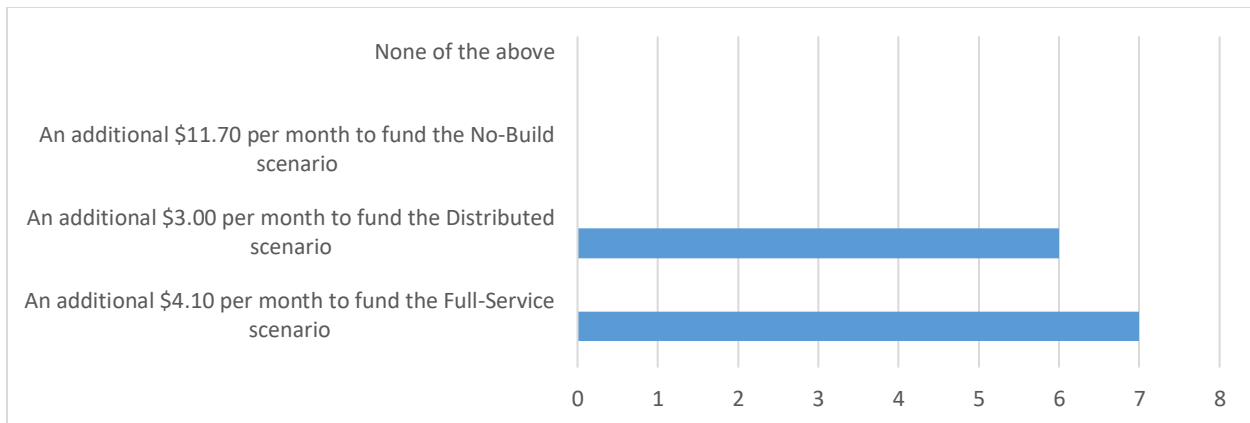


Figure 20. Cost preferences, Siletz Portland area office (n=10)

### Input from Metro Council

After Council discussed the scenarios in November 2023, they asked for detail surrounding the different policy levers Council could use to meet system facility gaps, including:

- Tonnage management policies,
- Balance between Transfer Station Fees and the Regional System Fee, and
- Level of investment

Council discussion also touched on the values that influence system priorities. In addition to waste reduction, service quality and access, and affordability which Council prioritized at the outset of this project, we heard that safety and support for existing businesses and community-based organizations within the system are important in this project.

With these values in mind, **Councilors indicated an early preference for the Distributed and No Build scenarios.** However, all Councilors indicated that additional information and discussion is needed to build a preferred scenario. Input and direction from Metro Council members included:

- It would be helpful to have more detail on where distributed facilities would be located.
- Support for collaborating with the RMA for locating recycling depots.
- Interest in exploring the cost structure and learning more about rate sensitivity and support for low-income households, as the engagement results show people are interested in expanded services, but have limited appetite for increased cost.
- It will be important to continue to engage project audiences to build consensus on recommendations and show how input was used.
- Interest in exploring Metro’s role in the system such that project outcomes don’t simply shift costs among sectors, but result in better outcomes overall.

### What’s next

The schedule to complete the System Facilities Plan was extended through the end of 2024 to ensure there is enough time to work collaboratively with project stakeholders to build a plan that has broad, regional support. The project team will use the input received from the stakeholders and partners they engaged in 2023 and 2024, and Council’s direction in November 2023 and January 2024, to develop a proposed set of investments (combining the most preferred elements from the scenarios) for further Council input and discussion in spring 2024. Councilors will participate in an interactive workshop where

they will be able to consider the options and trade-offs of different facility investments and programs in three key areas: public facilities, commercial facilities, and reuse and repair.

The next round of engagement will follow Council's direction on a preferred set of investments. The project team plans to share the preferred scenario with project stakeholders, partners and advisory groups for their review and input. In the summer, Council will be asked to confirm the direction of the plan going forward. Following Council's confirmation, a full draft plan will be prepared with a presentation of the set of investments, along with an implementation strategy. The draft plan will be put out for public comment in fall 2024 and a final plan will be brought to Council to consider for adoption at the end of 2024.

## Appendices

- A. Phase 3 Symposium Summary Report
- B. Industry Interviews Summary Report
- C. Waste Prevention and Environmental Services Staff Survey Report