

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting  
Date: Thursday, February 15 2024  
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.  
Place: Zoom meeting  
Purpose: *The purpose of the Regional Waste Advisory Committee is to provide input on certain policies, programs, and projects that implement actions in the 2030 Regional Waste Plan, as well as to provide input on certain legislative and administrative actions that the Metro Council or Chief Operating Officer will consider related to the implementation of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan.*

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**Members in Attendance:**

Marta McGuire, Metro  
Alondra Flores-Aviña, Trash for Peace  
Sharetta Butcher, North by Northeast Community Health Center (NxNE)  
Jackie Kirouac-Fram, Rebuilding Center  
Teresa Gaddy, system user  
Christa McDermott, Community Environmental Services, PSU  
Audrey O'Brien, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Beth Vargas Duncan, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association (ORRA)  
Ryan Largura, City of Troutdale  
Kathy Folsom, Washington County  
Eben Polk, City of Portland  
Andrew Bartlett, City of Hillsboro

**1. CALL TO ORDER & MEETING OVERVIEW****2. Investment and Innovation grant program update**

Marta McGuire introduced Suzanne Piluso from Metro.

*Key points of the presentation included:*

Ms. Piluso reported back on the Council's input on the program update. At the Council work session on January 23, Ms. Piluso shared RWAC's feedback on the proposed assessment. Council supports the assessment of the program and agrees it is the right time for the update. Councilors encouraged a focus on the reuse sector. Other suggestions included consideration of a hybrid program with directed funding toward key partners while maintaining some kind of capital investment program to support technology projects with demonstrated results. A Councilor also suggested we consider a rolling grant cycle to be nimbler. Councilors emphasized continued relationships with the community in this process.

**3. System Facilities Plan – Engagement update**

Marta McGuire introduced Marissa Grass from Metro.

*Key points of the presentation included:*

The presentation reviewed the engagement to date on the System Facilities Plan. The project performed targeted engagement with stakeholders that helped build scenarios for discussion. at the Reuse, Recycling and Garbage Symposium. The most popular scenarios were the distributed and no build scenarios, but 80% of participants said they would change aspects of these scenarios. Following the symposium workshops were held with waste prevention civic engagement recipients, the Metropolitan Mayors Consortium. Metro staff participated in a survey giving feedback on the scenarios. Metro also consulted seven tribes throughout this process. Metro Council took a straw poll on November 9, 2023, and shared support for the

distributed and no-build scenarios with additional caveats. The project team is working on a range of options that address stakeholder feedback to bring to Council to discuss trade offs before selecting a preferred scenario.

*Member Discussion:*

Eben Polk, City of Portland, asked for confirmation that the scenario fee increases are based on a monthly household bill. Ms. Grass replied that was correct.

Ryan Largura, City of Troutdale, asked what the international panel contributed to the development of the system's plan. Ms. Grass replied that the idea of a reuse mall was very popular in the comments in the symposium. The presentation from Vancouver that shared what modern facilities could be like also had strong references. Boulder Colorado's Recycle Row is a collocated business model, and New Zealand's bulky waste program all garnered strong interest from stakeholders.

Christa McDermott, Portland State, asked if there wasn't a lot of support for the full service model except for two features, what were those? Ms. Grass replied that it was the reuse mall and depot that were popular.

Jackie Kirouac-Fram, Rebuilding Center, commented that a reuse mall is super exciting, but the level of impact from that type of project should be considered. These are often more demonstration projects and don't move the needle on diversion goals. She also commented that if reuse elements are the most popular, Metro should continue to work with the reuse sector to implement changes that truly support the reuse sector.

Mr. Polk asked if the Council already received this presentation. Ms. McGuire confirmed Council already received this presentation. Mr. Polk asked for advice on how to tie data back to this presentation. For example, where did the idea come from to have different collection sites for commercial and residential customers? Ms. Grass replied that the symposium report has this data, but there will be a final engagement report that includes comments from stakeholders after the symposium.

Audrey O'Brien, DEQ, thought that stakeholders preferred the distributed or full service model, so why is Council supporting the no build? This option is more expensive. She thought the other options better supported the Regional Waste Plan goals. Ms. Grass replied that there could have been an assumption that no build would be cheaper. Estee Segal, Metro, replied that Councilors were drawn to no build to narrow Metro's role in the system, and are very cost sensitive. Ms. McGuire added that the no build scenario also maximizes materials being collected at the curb.

Beth Vargas Dunca, ORRA, thanked Metro staff and the council for putting so much effort into this project. She asked about the level of investment slide, were the fees created on the same basis? Luis Sandoval, Metro, replied that rate impacts for scenarios are built on different assumptions because of how Metro provides services or delegates them to other stakeholders. Ms. Vargas Duncan requested a summary of Mr. Sandoval's full reply.

Ms. Kirouac-Fram asked about the decision to create the scenarios. What would have the response been if the elements were presented and then a scenario based on those preferences was created? Ms. McGuire replied that the process was built on planning practices.

Mr. Polk thanked Ms. Segal and Mr. Sandoval for answering so many questions through this process. Shared that the scenarios helped build an understanding of trade offs, but understanding the scoring was challenging.

Mr. Largura asked if you took items to a collection depot would be free or if would there be a charge? Mr. Sandoval replied that the assumption would be that reuse items, and most recycling and hazardous waste would be free. Garbage and yard waste would not be free.

Mr. Largura asked if these fee assumptions are separate from the current budget. Ms. McGuire confirmed.

Mr. Largura asked if he was correct when he saw Council having no interest in strongly regulating the system's rates. McGuire replied that they did not explicitly express no interest in regulation but supported the existing configuration of transfer stations.

#### **4. Budget Development**

Marta McGuire presented on Budget Development.

*Key points of the presentation included:*

Marta presented on the Budget Development. She reviewed Metro's budget process and the proposed Waste Prevention and Environmental Services budget for 2024-2025.

*Member Discussion:*

Kathy Folsom, Washington County, asked if the 7-8% direction will be reset. Ms. McGuire replied that when Council initially set that approach it was for a five year horizon. There is currently a fee policy task force that could change that direction. The budget we requested is within the 8% ceiling.

Andrew Bartlett, City of Hillsboro, asked if the fee ceiling was a total or just the regional system fee like last year. Ms. McGuire replied that the cost of service for the regional system fee programs is at 8% and we cannot charge more than the cost of service. At this time, it is unknown if Council will adjust the solid waste fee higher than 8% based on the overall budget. The budget is being evaluated by the COO currently.

Mr. Largura asked if the household hazardous waste events were mentioned. Is there an increase in this budget? Ms. McGuire replied that last year a position was reallocated to expand these events, but materials were not increased for these events.

Mr. Largura asked if the money to local governments included reimbursement to haulers. Ms. McGuire replied that next year's budget is a status quo budget, which includes all the existing programs and investments including the access to payments for haulers.

Mr. Largura is interested to hear about the plan to maintain budgets while lowering tonnage. Ms. McGuire replied that the current system retains 40% of wet waste for Metro's transfer stations. There are no decisions on changing allocations, which would be part of the system facilities plan.

Ms. Vargas Duncan thanked staff for receiving budget information earlier. Ms. Vargas Duncan requested a slide that was not just by service area, but what fee funds what services. Ms. McGuire thanked her for that clarification and will work to provide that information. There will be an overview presentation of the programs funded by the regional system fee forthcoming. Ms. Vargas Duncan asked what the system look like if we did reduce tons overtime as a question to think about moving forward.

Ms. McDermott asked about the costs for the de-packager and food waste. Is there budget money going toward prevention or more upstream solutions? Ms. McGuire replied that Metro does have a dedicated position supporting food waste and donations. There are no budget

additions for this work, but Metro is maintaining the current level of effort. We could bring this topic back for RWAC to see.

Mr. Polk replied to Christa that some of this work is happening at the local level and would be happy to speak about it as well.

Mr. Polk asked about the local government feedback, was there support noted for the rate transparency project? Curious about where this work is at. Ms. McGuire replied that this is more of a policy update. The council directed staff to gather more information on best practices, provide stakeholder feedback, and a more detailed approach on how to conduct the study. This information has been provided to Council and a work session will be planned to take this policy back to Council.

Ms. McDermott, returning to food waste, does Metro have baseline data to understand diversion rates and that in the same vein, construction and demolition materials have a greater opportunity for more than incremental change regarding reductions upstream? Ms. McGuire replied that Metro has started scoping the diversion of construction debris. Analytics is working on indicators for food waste.

Mr. Largura asked for clarification on rate transparency, Ms. McGuire clarified that Council has not decided on completing a rate transparency study yet, and it will be considered in the coming weeks at Council.

#### **5. Consideration of meeting minutes**

The January meeting minutes were approved.

#### **6. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

There were no public comments.

#### **Final Remarks**

**MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:30 a.m.**