



Metro



**2030 Regional Waste Plan:  
Equity, health and the environment**

# Executive summary

# Introduction

The garbage and recycling system is more than garbage trucks and recycling bins. It's about reducing waste and protecting the environment. It's about making sure everyone has access to high-quality services, information and economic opportunities. And it's about reducing the impacts of products throughout their lives.

The 2030 Regional Waste Plan connects those values—from jobs and services to health and the environment—to specific actions aimed at achieving them. It's the guide that Metro, cities, counties and others involved in managing the garbage and recycling system will use to determine what to focus on over the next 12 years.

From spring 2017 to fall 2018, Metro worked with communities around greater Portland to shape the future of the garbage and recycling system. This plan reflects those voices and continues our efforts to protect the environment, keep people healthy and ensure everyone has what they need to thrive.

## What is the 2030 Regional Waste Plan?

**Plan website:** [www.oregonmetro.gov/regionalwasteplan](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/regionalwasteplan)

The 2030 Regional Waste Plan is both a vision for greater Portland's garbage and recycling system and a blueprint for achieving that vision. Metro created the plan in partnership with cities, counties, businesses and community leaders in the greater Portland area. Metro also collaborated with members of culturally specific community-based organizations who historically have had the least influence in the decision-making process to shape the garbage and recycling system. This will help ensure the plan moves us toward a system that delivers benefits shared by all.





### What problems and opportunities does the new plan address?

The 2030 Regional Waste Plan addresses challenges with our regional garbage and recycling system, including:

How it impacts the environment, both locally and globally, and throughout the life of the products we make, use and throw away.

How it impacts human health, including harmful emissions from facilities and chemicals in products that pose a danger.

The long history of exclusionary and discriminatory policies and practices that continue to harm communities in the region.

In addressing these challenges, the plan also seeks to take advantage of opportunities, such as:

Protecting our climate

Reducing pollution

Preventing harm to human health

Sharing the system's economic benefits equitably

Looking at the full life of products, from when they're designed and made until they're thrown away

Engaging local communities and community organizations throughout the process



### PREVIOUS WASTE PLANS

Metro has adopted three solid waste system plans to date. These are updated about every 10 years to meet the needs of the changing region and to align with state and federal guidance.

## Addressing the full life of products

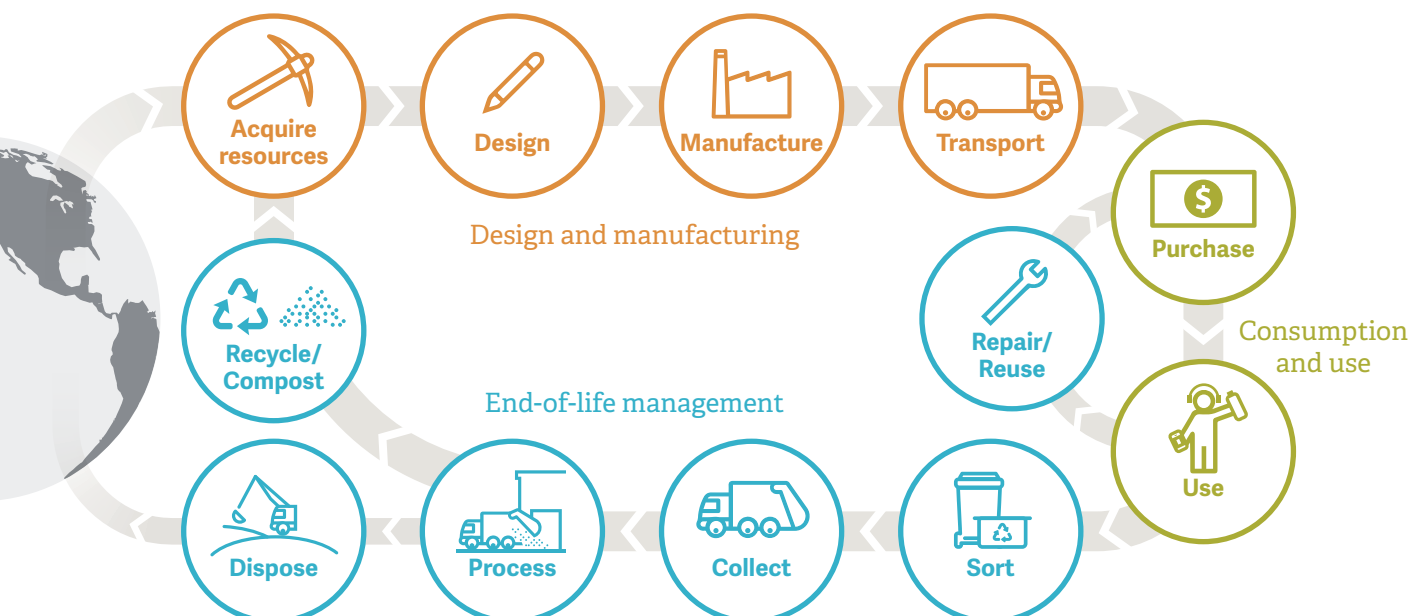
This Regional Waste Plan addresses the entire life cycle of products. The goals and actions are designed to not only improve the way we manage materials at the end of their life, but also to reduce harmful impacts by intervening earlier. There's opportunity to improve how we design and produce products, extract raw materials from the earth, make purchasing decisions and use what we buy. The traditional garbage and recycling system, which handles products and packaging after we are done with them, is just one part of this larger system.

This life cycle approach can result in healthier people and a healthier planet. It can improve access to high-quality services and information, no matter where you live. It can help you decide what to buy or where to get rid of an item you are done using. It can also lessen the negative health and environmental impacts from the materials and products we use every day.

## Why Metro regulates the garbage and recycling system

The Metro Charter, the Oregon Constitution and Oregon Statutes grant Metro broad authority for planning, managing and overseeing the regional solid waste system to protect public health and safeguard the environment. As a part of these responsibilities, Metro is responsible for developing a regional plan that sets direction for programs, services and facilities. Metro and local governments work together to manage the system for the region and this plan set direction across the 12 years it will be in effect. It's a living document that will guide us toward a healthier, more resilient and more equitable system.

### THE FULL LIFE CYCLE OF PRODUCTS



# Metro's new approach

*For the 2030 Regional Waste Plan, Metro embarked on a new approach to planning for the future. The plan includes a significant focus on racial equity. It also addresses impacts throughout the life of products and materials. These core ideas strongly influence the goals and actions that make up the plan.*

## Leading with equity

Our region is stronger when everyone has access to financial prosperity, a healthy environment and the range of opportunities that allow us to thrive. But unfortunately, a long history of exclusionary and discriminatory policies has harmed communities of color in the Portland metropolitan region. As a result, communities of color currently experience the worst economic and social outcomes of any demographic group.

Metro, cities and counties are committed to creating the conditions that allow everyone to enjoy the benefits of our growing region. With our programs, policies and services, we are working to make this a great place for everyone—today and for generations to come.

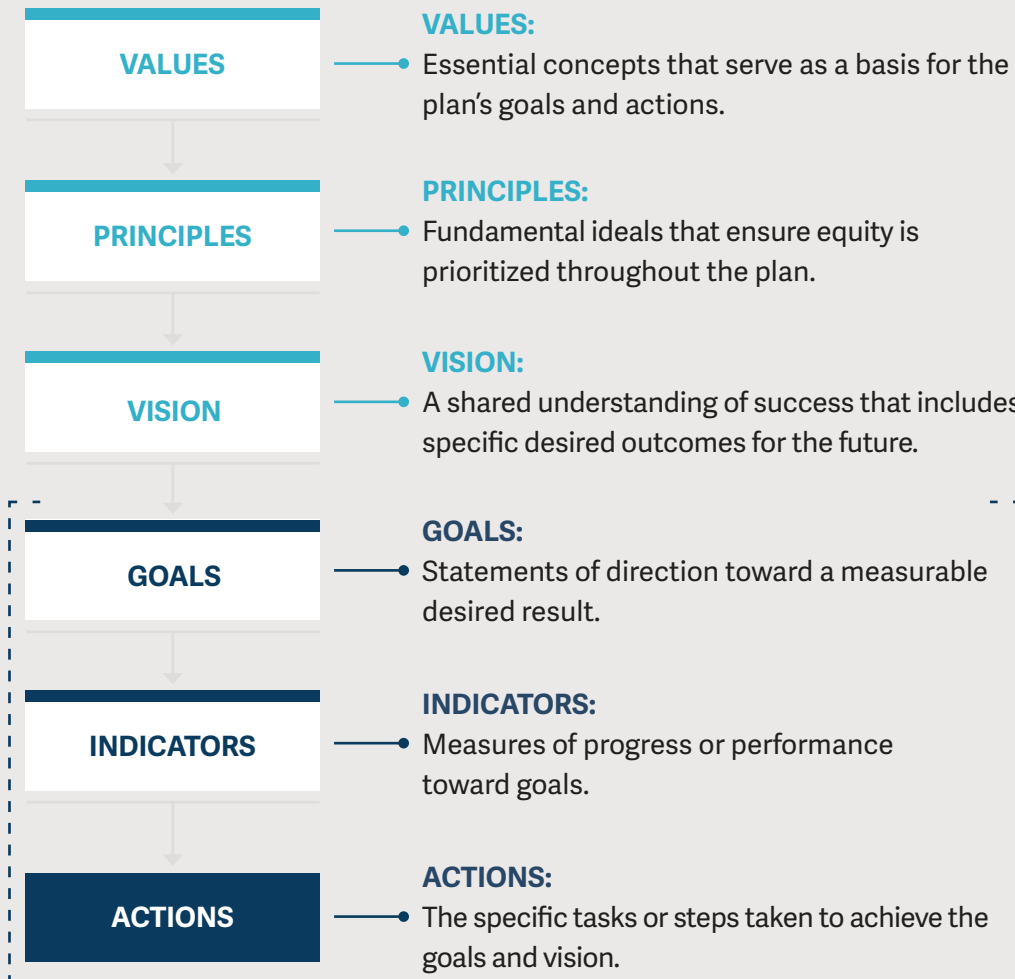
To address inequities and establish an inclusive process from the start, Metro convened an Equity Work Group, comprised of seven individuals with expertise and experience working with communities of color and historically marginalized communities, to engage in each phase of the process. The work group collaborated with staff to draft elements of the plan. Metro also partnered with eight community-based organizations to host a series of engagements about the future of garbage and recycling. Ideas and feedback gathered from the community informed many of the aspects of the plan.

### WHAT IS RACIAL EQUITY?

Racial equity has been achieved when race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and outcomes for all groups are improved.

## FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO CONCRETE ACTIONS

The values, principles and vision inspire and inform the concrete actions that Metro and local governments will implement as part of this plan.



40 actions focus directly on advancing equity and reducing disparities.

**E** This symbol identifies actions with the greatest potential for advancing racial equity.

Find the actions in the Goals and Actions section of the plan.

Learn more about how community engagement led to concrete action in the Creating the Plan section of the plan.

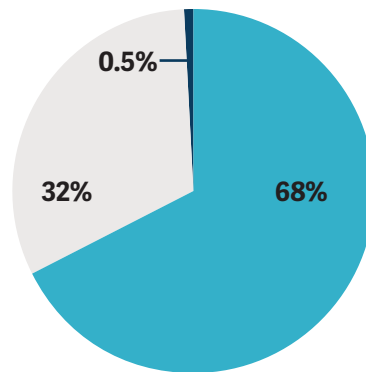
# Environmental impacts of products and materials

*Metro and others involved in the garbage and recycling system have typically measured the environmental impact of what we produce, consume and throw away by looking at the amount and types of items that show up in the recycling, composting and garbage.*

This focus on the end of a product's life provides an incomplete picture of how we're affecting the environment and how we can reduce our impact. In this plan, to align with a new focus on the full life cycle of products and materials, we are assessing our environmental impact in a more comprehensive way: by looking at the greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental and health impacts associated with products and materials throughout their life, from production to disposal.

## GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM PRODUCTS, MATERIALS AND SERVICES

In 2015, the Metro region generated 41 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions from the products and materials we bought, used and threw away and the services we used.



- Design and manufacturing: 68%
- Consumption and use: 32%
- End-of-life management: 0.5%

*Note: The figures in this chart do not add up to 100% due to rounding.  
Source: Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (2018). 2015 Consumption-Based Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for the Metro Region.*

### FIND IT IN THE PLAN

How equity and engagement shaped the plan (p. 16)

More about the full life cycle of products (p. 12)

A look at the environmental impacts of what we make and consume (p. 18)



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*These brief descriptions of the plan's content and organization are intended to help the reader more easily navigate the plan.*

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This section provides an overview of the plan by describing the key trends and challenges it addresses and the opportunities and outcomes it delivers. Also included is a brief guide to navigating the plan.

## **A new approach to managing waste .....10**

This section describes two ideas that are the foundation of Metro's approach: addressing the entire life of products and advancing equity. It outlines how the plan will reduce harmful impacts by intervening before a product reaches the end of its life. It also describes the importance of equity and introduces the community engagement process. Also included is a map of facilities, services and providers.

## **Environmental impacts of products and materials.....18**

This section explains how producing and consuming goods and services affects the environment--locally and beyond. It also shows why our choices about managing waste matter and describes ways to measure environmental impacts.

## **Economic footprint.....24**

This section looks at the economic footprint of the garbage and recycling system. It details how the fees residents pay for garbage and recycling services support jobs and economic activity.

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This section presents the history and existing policies that guide the plan.



## **Creating the plan .....34**

This section summarizes the steps taken to develop the plan, with a focus on the wide range of individuals, groups and advisors that gave input and guidance.

## **Values, principles and vision .....42**

This section describes essential concepts, or values, that guided creation of the plans vision and goals. It also describes the standard beliefs, or principles, that provide further direction for the plan's development and implementation. And it shares the desired future, or vision, for the garbage and recycling system. Together, the values, principles and vision are the foundation on which the plan is built.

## **Goals and actions .....48**

Goals and related actions in five areas will address the impacts of materials and products, from production to disposal. Metro, city and county governments will work to implement the actions in the coming years.

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This section describes how Metro and local governments will monitor work at all levels. It also describes processes to evaluate, measure and report progress to the community and elected officials.

## **Plan implementation .....108**

This section focuses on the roles of those responsible for carrying out the plan and the approach to completing actions, ensuring compliance with existing requirements and amending the plan.

## **Appendices**

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### **Waste Reduction Program**

(list of plan items that meet the waste reduction requirements required by state law)

### **Key solid waste laws**

### **Glossary of terms**

# Values, principles and vision

*With equity considerations front and center, the values, principles and vision serve as the plan's foundation. Existing guidance—including regional, state and federal policies and plans regarding waste management, recycling, toxics and other related environmental programs—informed these core concepts.*

## Values

The values serve as a basis for the plan's goals and actions and will guide implementation.



### **PROTECT AND RESTORE THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROMOTE HEALTH FOR ALL**

- Ensure that current and future generations enjoy clean air, water and land
- Lead efforts to reduce impacts of climate change and minimize release of toxins in the environment



### **CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES**

- Reduce the amount of energy, water and raw materials needed to make products
- Manage materials to their highest and best use (reduce, reuse, recycle)



### **ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY**

- Facilitate life-long environmental learning for youth and adults
- Increase knowledge of natural systems, and the human impacts on them, in order to foster civic responsibility and community empowerment



### **FOSTER ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

- Promote inclusive prosperity and living well for all residents of the region
- Increase access to economic opportunities for all communities



### **ENSURE OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE, ADAPTABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

- Maintain a regional system that is safe and responsive to changing conditions to ensure long-term viability
- Prepare for recovery after natural disasters



### **PROVIDE EXCELLENT SERVICE AND EQUITABLE SYSTEM ACCESS**

- Ensure that high-quality and good-value programs, services and facilities are equitably accessible to all

# Principles

*This plan provides Metro and local governments a powerful opportunity to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion. The following principles were developed by the Equity Work Group in collaboration with Metro staff. Their purpose is to help address historical and disproportionate impacts of the waste system on marginalized communities and to define how the plan may advance racial equity.*

## Community restoration

Take action to repair past harms and disproportionate impacts caused by the regional solid waste system. In practice, this means:

- Acknowledging historical impacts passed from generation to generation within communities.
- Actively including communities that have been historically marginalized from decision-making processes.
- Equitably distributing costs and benefits, taking into account historical and system impacts.
- Valuing indigenous and cultural knowledge about using resources sustainably.
- Committing to building a greater awareness of equity among providers of garbage and recycling services.

## Community partnerships

Develop authentic partnerships and community trust to advance the plan's vision. In practice, this means:

- Prioritizing historically marginalized communities within the delivery of programs and services.
- Expanding voice and decision-making opportunities for communities of color.
- Supporting resilient community relationships by creating ongoing opportunities for leadership development.

## Community investment

Emphasize resource allocation to communities of color and historically marginalized communities. In practice, this means:

- Making investment decisions in partnership with communities.
- Investing in impacted communities and youth through education and financial resources.
- Eliminating barriers to services and employment.

# Vision

*The 2030 Vision identifies the desired future for the garbage and recycling system and specific outcomes for managing and reducing the impacts of products consumed in the region. The goals and actions are designed to close the gap between today and this desired future.*

## **Economic prosperity**

Innovation, investments and partnerships support a thriving garbage, recycling, reuse and repair economy that benefits local communities.

## **Good jobs**

All garbage and recycling industry jobs pay living wages and provide opportunities for career advancement. All occupations in the industry reflect the diversity of our local communities.

## **Education and information**

Everyone has the culturally relevant, age-appropriate information and educational resources needed to make purchasing and disposal decisions that will protect their health and the environment.

## **Healthy products**

Companies and consumers share responsibility for reducing the harmful impacts of products and packaging on public health, climate, air quality, waterways and wildlife throughout the entire life cycle of products.

## **Reduce, reuse and repair**

Reduce, reuse, repair and donation are mainstream practices accessible to all, creating economic opportunity and building community self-reliance.

## **Quality service**

Garbage and recycling services meet the needs of all people and all communities.

## **Garbage and recycling operations**

From trucks to facilities, our garbage and recycling system is safe for workers and the public, minimizes pollution of air, soils and water, and is financially sustainable.

## **Preparedness and resilience**

The region's garbage and recycling system is resilient and prepared to recover quickly from disruptions like natural disasters, while minimizing harmful impacts to the most affected communities.



# Goals and actions

*The goals of the plan focus on addressing the impacts of materials—from production to disposal—and closing the gap between today's reality and the region's vision for the future. This involves taking action at every stage of the product life cycle and addressing community needs within the garbage and recycling system.*

The plan identifies goals and actions in five areas of work:

- Shared prosperity
- Product design and manufacturing
- Product consumption and use
- Product end-of-life management
- Disaster resilience

The goals in each area identify what the region would like to achieve by 2030. Each goal has an associated set of actions to be undertaken by Metro and local governments.



# Shared prosperity

This area of work aims to address barriers faced by communities of color and those who have been disproportionately impacted by the garbage and recycling system. Through the goals and actions in this section, Metro and local governments aim to make progress toward a future where all people have equitable access to the benefits of the garbage, recycling, reuse and repair economies.

- Goal 1:** Increase engagement of youth and adults historically underrepresented in garbage and recycling decision-making by enhancing civic engagement and leadership opportunities.
- Goal 2:** Increase the percentage of garbage and recycling system revenue that benefits local communities and companies owned by people of color and other underrepresented groups.
- Goal 3:** Ensure that all jobs in the garbage and recycling industry pay living wages and include good benefits.
- Goal 4:** Increase the diversity of the workforce in all occupations where people of color, women and other historically marginalized communities are underrepresented.

## FIND IT IN THE PLAN

Learn more on p. 52 of the plan.



# Product design and manufacturing

The goal of the highly collaborative actions in this new area is for manufacturers to become more responsible for the impacts of their products. There's potential to create healthier products every step of the way, from natural resource extraction to manufacturing processes to decisions about materials and packaging.

- Goal 5:** Reduce the environmental and human health impacts of products and packaging that are made, sold, used or disposed in Oregon.

## FIND IT IN THE PLAN

Learn more on p. 60 of the plan.





# Product consumption and use

Goals in this area focus on reducing the environmental and health impacts of what we buy and use. The actions emphasize education and policy efforts to reduce those impacts and support better purchasing choices. Education will prioritize culturally responsive efforts, with programs and services designed and delivered in partnership with community organizations to reach historically marginalized groups. Policy actions in this area aim to provide safer, lower-risk products and reduce the use of single-use items that harm the environment and create problems for the recycling system.

**Goal 6:** Reduce product environmental impacts and waste through educational and behavioral practices related to prevention and better purchasing choices.

**Goal 7:** Reduce product environmental impacts and waste through policies that support prevention practices and better purchasing choices.

## FIND IT IN THE PLAN

Learn more on p. 64 of the plan.



# Product end-of-life management

Every year, the greater Portland region disposes of well more than 1 million tons of garbage and recovers more than 1 million tons of food scraps, yard trimmings and recyclables. While the ultimate goal is to prevent waste to begin with, the Portland region still needs a system that safely and conveniently manages products at the end of their useful life. The goal of the actions in this area is to ensure that the programs and services not only protect human health and the environment, but that they do so in a way that meets the needs of all residents and all communities today and into the future.

**Goal 8:** Increase the reuse, repair and donation of materials and consumer products.

**Goal 9:** Increase knowledge among community members about garbage, recycling and reuse services.

**Goal 10:** Provide regionally consistent services for garbage, recyclables and other priority materials that meet the needs of all users.

**Goal 11:** Address and resolve community concerns and service issues.

**Goal 12:** Manage all garbage and recycling operations to reduce their nuisance, safety and environmental impacts on workers and the public.

**Goal 13:** Invest in communities that receive garbage and recyclables from the Metro region so that those communities regard solid waste facilities as assets.

**Goal 14:** Adopt rates for all services that are reasonable, responsive to user economic needs, regionally consistent and well understood.

**Goal 15:** Improve the systems for recovering recyclables, food scraps and yard debris to make them resilient to changing markets and evolving community needs.

**Goal 16:** Maintain a system of facilities, from smaller recycling drop-off depots to larger full-service stations, to ensure equitable distribution of and access to services.

## FIND IT IN THE PLAN

Learn more on p. 70 of the plan.





# Disaster resilience

The region's garbage and recycling system must be resilient and prepared to recover quickly after a disaster, and the recovery process should minimize harmful impacts to local communities. These actions focus on coordinating effectively with partners, preparing to restore routine garbage and recycling services following a disruption, and planning to expedite the removal of debris in a way that makes the best use of local services and maximizes recovery.

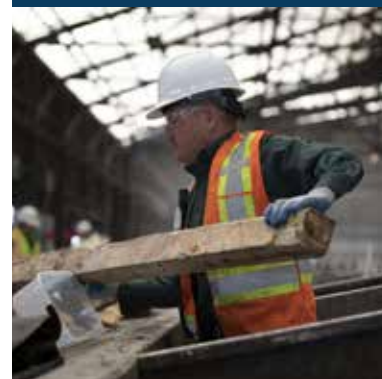
**Goal 17:** Effectively coordinate public and private partners in planning for the impact of disasters on the solid waste system.

**Goal 18:** Ensure routine garbage and recycling collection, processing, transport and disposal operations can be restored quickly following a system disruption.

**Goal 19:** Plan disaster debris response operations to expedite the clearance and removal of debris, making the best use of locally-based services and materials and maximizing recovery.

## FIND IT IN THE PLAN

Learn more on p. 94 of the plan.



# Plan implementation

## Implementation

*Responsibility for implementing the 2030 Regional Waste Plan is shared by Metro and city and county governments in the region. The actions in the plan will be carried out by these agencies in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, for-profit garbage and recycling companies, and non-profit organizations involved in different areas of the system.*

Metro is responsible for coordinating implementation of the plan and assessing plan performance. Cities, counties and Metro are responsible for leading or participating in implementation of the actions. Several different approaches, described on page 116 of the plan, will be used to implement the actions. In the action tables in the Goals and actions section, one or more implementation approaches are identified for each action and Metro and/or cities and counties is indicated as the lead.






Implementation of the actions will be coordinated through regional and local work plans developed by Metro and local governments to prioritize actions.

## Measuring progress

*The plan includes a robust measurement framework to evaluate progress toward its vision and goals. This will allow Metro and local governments to demonstrate the positive impacts the plan's activities are having on the region, highlight opportunities for improvement and evaluate which programs and projects are helping the region achieve its desired outcomes.*

### **Key indicators**

Key indicators communicate the overall trajectory of progress to a broad audience. They draw from the plan's values and demonstrate overall performance. A number of the key indicators are new measures that would require investment to implement.

VALUE	KEY INDICATORS	LEAD AGENCY	STATUS
	Greenhouse gas emissions associated with the products and services consumed in the Metro region (Environment and Health value)	Metro	In progress
	Annual tons of waste generated (Resource Conservation value)	Metro	In progress
	Number, geographic location and demographics of youth reached through education programs (Environmental Literacy value)	Metro	In progress
	Share of multifamily communities with adequate collection services (Service Excellence and Equity value)	Metro Cities Counties	Investment needed
	Recycling contamination by sector (Operational Resilience value)	Metro	Investment needed
	Median wage in the waste management industry by race, ethnicity and gender (Economic Well-Being value)	Metro Cities Counties	Investment needed

## Goal indicators

Indicators at the goal level are designed to measure the progress of specific programs, policies or investments that are linked to attaining the 2030 Regional Waste Plan's goals. A number of the goal indicators will also inform the key indicators. The goal indicators are listed on page 104 of the plan.

## Baseline and targets

As of the date of adoption of this plan, all of the indicators need additional work to develop baseline and evaluation methodologies. This work will be completed within the first two years of plan implementation, after which Metro, in consultation with local governments and community partners, will establish targets for each indicator.

## Progress reports

On an annual basis, Metro will report on the status of each action and whether it has been implemented. Reporting on the key and goal indicators will occur at least every three years.

# Plan oversight

*Metro Council, the Metro Policy Advisory Committee and the Regional Waste Plan Implementation Committee will oversee implementation of the plan.*

The Regional Waste Plan Implementation Committee will be newly formed following adoption of the Regional Waste Plan. The committee is expected to provide input on development of the programs and policies that implement the plan's actions and advise the Metro Council and Metro Chief Operating Officer on legislative and administrative actions they will consider related to plan implementation.

If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the Convention Center, put out your trash or drive your car – we’ve already crossed paths.

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So, hello. We’re Metro – nice to meet you.

In a metropolitan area as big as Portland, we can do a lot of things better together. Join us to help the region prepare for a happy, healthy future.

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[oregonmetro.gov/news](http://oregonmetro.gov/news)

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Plan adopted by Ordinance No. 19-1431 on March 7, 2019.

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