



Meeting minutes

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting
Date: Thursday, December 17, 2020
Time: 8 a.m. to 10 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 implementation of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan.*

Members in Attendance:

Roy Brower, Metro
Joe Buck, Small business owner
Sharetta Butcher, North by Northeast Community Health Center (NxNE)
Marilou Carrera, Portland Resident
Thomas Egleston, Washington County
Alondra Flores Aviña, Student
Shannon Martin, City of Gresham
Christa McDermott, Community Environmental Services, PSU (PSU)
Audrey O'Brien, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Eben Polk, Clackamas County
Jenny Slepian, City of Lake Oswego
Beth Vargas Duncan, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association (ORRA)

Members Absent:

Jill Kolek, City of Portland

1. CALL TO ORDER & MEETING OVERVIEW

Roy Brower (Metro) brought the virtual meeting to order at 8:02 am.

2. CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS

Committee meeting minutes for November 19, 2020 were approved by the committee.

3. COMMITTEE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Mr. Brower reviewed the tentative committee schedule of topics for 2021 meetings (see attached at the end of the meeting minutes).

4. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RID PATROL'S WORKFORCE TRANSITION PROGRAM EXPANSION

Brody Abbott (Metro) introduced three questions being posed to the committee for consideration/dialogue:

1. Who should we (Metro) consider engaging?
2. How can this program support your work?
3. How can this program align with the solid waste sector to diversify workforce and develop employment pathways?

Alondra Flores Aviña (Student) expressed that the RID Patrol program does great work, especially looking into the issues like the root issues. She noted that it seems like not a lot of government programs do that and it's good that they're focused on racial equity and looking at root causes.

Marilou Carrera (Portland Resident) referenced the recovery community as a good general group for engagement. She asked about how Metro was engaging youth or encouraging youth participation. Also engaging women, transgender, non-binary folks very explicitly to the program as well. She noted some other groups: Oregon Recovers, Fourth Dimension, MAPS, Women First Transition and Referral Services. She emphasized organizations and opportunities where there is peer mentorship and/or broad networks.

Christa McDermott (PSU) began addressing the question about engagement. With regard to looking at workforce and hiring institutions, she was curious what the city and haulers partners on this committee have to say about that. She referenced Ground Score. Ms. McDermott asked for clarification on the second question.

Stephanie Rawson (Metro) clarified that everyone on the committee has different connections to Metro and this work, and staff didn't want to limit perspectives to just non-profits or to the solid waste sector because there are many different touch points and connections. The goal is to get different ideas and perspective.

Ms. McDermott wanted to see some connections to higher education. She shared that it would be wonderful to have some kind of professional development bridge with the RID Patrol program or with community colleges or other colleges in the area.

Rob Nathan (Metro) echoed Ms. McDermott's comments and noted that may be projects that students at Portland State University are working on where there is an opportunity to collaborate. Assuming there is capacity post COVID, where there's an opportunity to collaborate/think outside the box.

Mr. Brower echoed that there could be opportunities to collaborate with higher education institutions/programs to conduct more research on root causes.

Joe Buck (Small business owner) asked how the current RID Patrol program functions.

Ms. Rawson explained that currently the program asks for a one – three year commitment. Metro partners with Constructing Hope and POIC (Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center) to connect folks who might be interested in this work. Right now, since the program is so small, it is really easy to tailor everything to those individuals. As the program expands, it will be more difficult to tailor to the same extent. Once Metro reaches the design phase, that's where the building and programming sets in.

Beth Vargas Duncan (ORRA) expressed support on the RID Patrol program. She emphasized the value in engaging the houseless population as much as possible, both in education and also working with them to help transition out of their situations.

Thomas Egleston (Washington County) wanted to see greater engagement with the west side communities. There could now be a real intentional conversation about what RID Patrol on the west side looks like and how communities can be served. Mr. Egleston noted that he'd happy to help bridge those connections and work with Metro and city partners in the cooperative to make those connections and have those conversations so that that the regional rate payers are benefiting from the service that they're contributing to. And they don't have to pay twice through our roads crews going out and doing the same thing if RID Patrol is out there doing that work.

Sharetta Butcher (NxNE) shared that she believes in the program and knows that it is going to make a difference and the services are going to be able to branch down into the communities that need it.

Mr. Nathan asked Ms. Butcher if she saw any links with North by Northeast Community Center.

Ms. Butcher shared that if they encounter individuals needing medical insurance that the health clinic can help with that. Also that the Master Recyclers are branched out doing different things right now but they are looking forward to getting the classes going again in the future.

Shannon Martin (City of Gresham) expressed appreciation for the work being done in and around Gresham as well as their intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with Metro. He asked if there is a plan to expand the number of crews in the community doing this work.

Ms. Rawson shared that the goal is to expand. Before COVID, Metro had four crews and they were keeping up with demand, but at a really high burn-out rate. Now that Metro is down to two crews and the demand has increased, expansion is critical. There are some ideas for potential other things Metro could be doing in partnership with the Parks & Nature department at Metro and other local jurisdictions to add some variety to the work. The idea is to add more crews in order to continue meeting the demands for services and provide them in an effective and efficient timeframe.

Eben Polk (Clackamas County) expressed interest in conversations around providing a next step after an opportunity in the RID program. If someone's interested in staying within the materials management world, what kinds of opportunities could there be? What kinds of opportunities are individuals interested in? How can Metro and local governments be intentional around that and partner with collection companies as well.

Ms. Rawson shared some of the things they are looking for:

- What are potential job opportunities in the solid waste sector?
- What are the skills and characteristics that the solid waste sector needs or is looking for in potential candidates?
- Is Metro the best source to provide those particular training and skills? And if not, who?
- Who can Metro partner with to give folks those opportunities while working with us in RID?
- Where are different opportunities (transfer stations, haulers, administration, research, etc.)?
- What are employers looking for?
- How best can folks be set up for success?

Mr. Nathan shared that when Metro moves into the pathway mapping work and program design, there's going to be an opportunity to convene stakeholders to identify what those opportunities are in your workforce equity programs and how programs like Metro's can support workforce equity priorities. Also, what are the barriers within institutions?

Mr. Polk noted that there are organizations that have been working for a long time throughout the region helping folks who have been incarcerated to find employment. How is Metro learning from others' lessons learned?

Mr. Abbott responded that Metro has done research to better understand what organizations are providing opportunities for people who have barriers to employment, particularly felonies on their record, or have been previously incarcerated. Metro surveyed them to better understand their barriers and opportunities that they provide so that we can better align our program so we're not reinventing the wheel.

Mr. Egleston acknowledged that the West side has not been very proactive on homelessness and managing/supporting individuals or houseless individuals. With CARES Act funding going away on December 30th there will be a challenges of whether the community finds ways to support camp cleanups without that funding stream. He noted that they have been offering campers dumpsters and has been impressed to see campers organize themselves and work to clean their camps. The issue is larger than what Metro/RID Patrol can handle on their own. Mr. Egleston also noted that this is a tremendous amount of work to manage keeping houseless camps clean.

5. 2030 REGIONAL WASTE PLAN: REGIONAL WORK PLAN part 3

Holly Stirnkorb (Metro) presented the final list of actions that were selected for the three year work plan and discussed how committee input was incorporated into the final list of actions. She noted that there weren't major changes.

Beth Vargas Duncan asked if Metro could clarify what Goal 3.1 means by "establish a living wage." She shared that the folks in industry believe that they provide good jobs, with the haulers she works with and represents. She wanted to understand the difference between living wage versus minimum wage -- is it a percentage beyond minimum wage? She wanted to get a frame of reference to know what Metro is striving for here.

Mr. Brower noted that it has not been completely defined. Metro is currently looking at this internally. This is something beyond minimum wage. And it's typically in the \$15 to \$17 per hour range, but it's going to vary for different types of jobs. Staff are looking at that in a couple of different ways. First, Metro is looking at this internally. Second, Metro is looking at it as a possible criteria for the tonnage based criteria for tonnage allocation. Metro is also looking at being able to do more salary surveys and within the industry to get a better idea of wages across industries, companies, and sectors.

Beth Vargas Duncan encouraged broader conversation on this topic. This can be a balancing act because wages link directly to costs which impacts rates. This is a conversation that will have to come forward.

Mr. Polk missed a few things in the local government-only review and he plans to share those updates to Metro. He also asked if Metro could share a little bit about how Metro went through its own internal process of identifying which actions they wanted to work on from among the actions that are Metro only. He also referenced action 15.10 and if Metro is committing to continuing that.

Mr. Brower noted that tip fees, cost and transparency are issues that are still valid and relevant today. And Metro is going to need to work with local governments and the advisory committee on in the future.

Ms. McDermott noted that the work plan has an overall emphasis on end user and end of life while the vision of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan (RWP) seems focused on prevention, creating less waste, etc. which is a big shift for the materials management industry. Her concern is that if the DEQ producer responsibility proposal does not go ahead in the state legislature, it isn't clear what Metro plans to do so that our region doesn't continue on the path of putting the burden on end users. Also, what Metro's role could be in the local and regional area of shifting things away from relying on end users to make a clean production material stream for recyclers, instead of reducing the types of packaging, making there less be fewer types of packaging, making it more reusable and more sustainable in many ways.

Pam Peck (Metro) emphasized that there are a significant amount of educational activities that happen for both youth and adults that are focused on upstream work. The school program shifted amazingly during COVID and have created a wealth of video content and other content for teachers, which staff expect will spread their reach further that staff had when we were visiting classrooms in person. There is also a lot of amazing work being done with community and the development of the environmental promoters program.

Audrey O'Brien (DEQ) chimed in as the DEQ representative to make sure people know that the requirements under the opportunity to recycle requirements that are incorporated into the RWP include a whole menu of actions that include waste prevention recovery, as well as the education to reduce contamination.

Ms. Stirnkorb provided next steps on the process with local governments, moving from the development of the three-year work plan to finalizing and implementing agreements into the spring. She plans to come back to the February meeting with an update.

6. WPES 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES & EQUITY PRINCIPLE

Scott Klag (Metro) shared that the presentation would cover the legislative priorities and particularly the process that goes on for how council establishes those. The second part of the presentation will come from Carl Grimm (Metro) to explain the equity principle that has been developed to fit into Metro Council's overall legislative principles and priorities. Mr. Klag shared that there are a few issues being discussed with council: the recycling system modernization bill, the producer responsibility bill for mattresses and producer responsibility for household hazardous waste. There is also some interest in a producer responsibility bill for medical sharps, a study on the bottle bill, and legislation around single use plastics and the right to repair.

Mr. Egleston noted that there will be a competing bill from the environmental lobby and it will be important to see how that impacts the conversation on modernizing Oregon's recycling and EPR in general.

Mr. Martin asked in the bottle bill study would be looking at OBRC's capacity to manage more materials.

Mr. Klag responded that he doesn't know if that has been an issue raised specifically. He thought it would come up in discussion though.

Ms. Peck added that there are a lot of feasibility issues just around the shapes of the bottles. Wine bottles are pretty all consistent, but think of liquor bottles, they're really all over the place. There are definitely feasibility issues that they want to look at, and that's why I think they're going to a study bill.

Ms. O'Brien also noted that there may be some discussions about wildfire response and emergency preparedness that will be coming up with this next legislative session.

Carl Grimm (Metro) presented to the committee on the equity principle. He explained that it comes from the RWP: "The regional waste plan aims to eliminate disparities experienced by people of color and historically marginalized communities from the full life cycle of products and packaging used and disposed in the region."

Metro supports legislation that achieves this by advancing:

1. Community restoration, community partnerships and community investment.
2. Access to recycling, waste, and reuse services, and information.
3. Good jobs with improved worker health and safety, compensation and career pathways.
4. Business opportunities in the local economy
5. Community health through minimized impacts from system operations, locally and in end markets, and from toxic chemicals and products and packaging.

Mr. Grimm also noted that legislation should require the establishment of targets, standards, and compliance processes as appropriate to ensure progress toward equity goals.

Ms. McDermott asked presenters to expand on a specific example to better express how the principle works in practice.

Mr. Grimm shared an example about community restoration and addressing/repairing past harm. Looking at bills, looking at reducing impacts on end market communities, there are elements that ensure that communities around facilities are not negatively impacted by nuisances, air pollution, trash, etc. That is just one example.

Ms. Peck also used mattress recycling as an example and how a convenience standard would come into play, i.e. how convenient is it for people to use those services? How convenient is it for people who live in multi-family homes to use those services? What kind of fees and things might be a barrier?

Ms. Carrera asked for clarification on how/where/for who the principle is meant to be used.

Ms. Peck clarified that this is a tool for staff. It's been more formalized for lobbyists, but it is mainly for staff.

Mr. Polk wished that their board would have legislative principles that could allow staff to be nimble and responsive in legislation. He wondered if there's any guidance from Metro Council or other more specific documents Metro can point to related to business opportunities in the local economy. This bullet/phrase felt a bit generic.

Mr. Brower responded that one can quickly get into legal interstate commerce and other types of issues fairly quickly, so it was intentionally kept very broad.

Mr. Egleston shared that Washington County developed legislative priorities with the board which gives staff confidence to advocate for legislation and speak on behalf of the County.

MEETING AJOURNED at 9:50 a.m.

Next meeting

January 21, 2021 8:30 am – 10:30 am (virtual meeting)