



Meeting minutes

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting
Date: Thursday, November 18, 2021
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 implementation of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan.*

Members in Attendance:

Roy W. Brower, Metro
Peter Brandom, City of Hillsboro
Sharetta Butcher, North by Northeast Community Health Center (NxNE)
Alondra Flores Aviña, Student
Bunsereyrithy Kong, Oregon Cambodian Buddhist Society
Lindsay Marshall, City of Tualatin
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
Arianne Sperry, City of Portland
Thao Tu, Vietnamese Community of Oregon

Members Absent

Beth Vargas Duncan, Oregon Refuse and Recycling Association (ORRA)

1. CALL TO ORDER & MEETING OVERVIEW

Roy Brower (Metro) brought the virtual meeting to order at 8:35 am and previewed the agenda.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Jackie Kirouac-Fram (Executive Director of the ReBuilding Center) gave public comment: The ReBuilding Center is a climate justice organization that's best known for waste reduction and having an amazing retail space and classes where we teach people how to work with reclaimed material and make reuse and prepare accessible for all. But lately we are undergoing a fairly significant shift where we are evolving all of our work to better serve homeowners living with low incomes. Part of that work as an organization is to help people aware of the importance of reuse for equity. Reuse is mentioned 89 times in the 2030 Regional Waste Plan, which is a lot and called out specifically in goal eight of the waste plan, which is to increase, reuse, repair and donation of materials in the Metro area. So not only is waste a pollution issue and a landfill issue and a community issue, it's an equity issue. As several reuse organizations like ReBuilding Center and Community Warehouse, nonprofit reuse organizations exist to build resilient communities by using resources that we already have, and without adequate avenues for reuse those resources for us, those are doors, windows, furniture, perfectly good lumber, home goods, and so much more that people need to repair and improve their homes and their lives, without a robust reuse sector and a reuse nonprofit, reuse sector in particular, that is working toward community impact and not

specifically working toward profit there are not sufficient resources to put those elements back into community and the resources literally go to waste. The regional waste plan specifically calls for increased investment in reuse infrastructure to reduce this needless waste and specifically calls out investment to increase salvage of building materials, which is specifically what the ReBuilding Center does. In addition to investments in reuse infrastructure in general, ReBuilding Center recently received a grant from the EPA to further our work. And we are in conversation with Congressman Earl Blumenauer, which I only point out to raise that reuse is an issue that is beginning to get more national intention, and the Portland region has a chance to lead in this area as it has in so many climate mitigation areas. So I wanted to introduce myself to the group. I wanted to really encourage this group to place some focus on reuse as a key element of solid waste management for equity over the next year or two. And also to offer myself for anyone who would like to learn more about reuse or the reuse sector, please feel free to shoot me an email. I'm very happy to talk with anyone who's interested and make myself a resource to this committee. Thank you all for your work.

Anna Kurnizki (Executive Director of the Community Warehouse) gave public comment: I'm here with in support of the ReBuilding Center and Jackie's message just before me, and it's great to see Sharetta Butcher here who is one of our board members. Community Warehouse is the only nonprofit furniture bank serving the greater Portland area. We would distribute furniture that is donated, furniture and household items, including mattresses, sofas, tables, and chairs, small appliances, kitchen items, and much more to our low income neighbors who are seeking furniture. We're an important partner in waste prevention as there are no other organizations in the Metro area that redistribute furniture to this scale. It is great to see in the 2030 Regional Waste Plan that Metro is focused on a life cycle approach. And if Metro is truly seeking to be a leader in sustainability and take into account the full impact of materials through their life cycle, plus invest in programs that promote fairness and equity, as well as vibrant communities, I'm echoing Jackie's message to elevate, reuse as an important part of that life cycle. As we know, I've been at Community Warehouse for almost nine years now. Funding, opportunities and broader support for reuse programs have historically been slim or sometimes left out of plans through Metro and other government organizations locally that do claim to prioritize reuse. We are to consider investing in the programs and organizations that deliver such great results for our community as part of this lifecycle approach. We do see that the plan includes goals related directly to reuse and increasing knowledge among community members about garbage recycling and reuse services, and to increase the reuse for parent donation of material and consumer products, particularly investing in neighborhood scale reuse and repair services and infrastructure. There are Metro-wide services that already exist, including Community Warehouse and the ReBuilding Center among others. Some of the top items that are dumped regionally are furniture items, namely mattresses and couches, and many residents, particularly those who are transit dependent may not be able to afford to pay to transport those items to places like Community Warehouse. Encouragement for Metro to invest in solutions to remove barriers to reuse and in large scale issues like this. Reuse is critical to this waste prevention cycle, and we encourage you to elevate it and give focus to it. I'm happy to be available to anybody. My email is Anna@communitywarehouse.org. You can find me at the Community Warehouse website, would love to give anyone a tour or chat more about what we do and our partnership, and with other reuse organizations throughout the Metro area. So thank you again for your time and appreciate the work you're doing. It's very importantly right now. Thank you.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

Committee members each had an opportunity to introduce themselves and share a bit about the work they do and their interest in participating as a member of the Regional Waste Advisory Committee. The committee welcomed five new members beginning their first term.

4. WORKING AGREEMENTS: Review

Noelle Dobson (Metro) led the committee members through an exercise to review the existing working agreements (attached at the end of these minutes) and to provide suggestions for possible changes to the committee working agreements. Changes will be reviewed by the committee at the December 16, 2021 committee meeting.

5. UPDATE ON METRO FOOD SCRAPS POLICY AND FOOD WASTE PROCESSING PROJECT

Holly Stirnkorb (Metro) and Will Elder (Metro) provided an update on the progress of the regional food scraps policy adopted by Metro Council in July of 2018, as well as progress on utilizing existing public infrastructure for processing of the food scraps collected. Ms. Stirnkorb provided some context on why Metro is focused heavily on food and why Metro Council directed staff to take more aggressive action on food waste:

- 40% of food in the United States is wasted.
- Landfills are significant emitters of methane, and food scraps are a primary contributor to the production of methane and landfills.

By requiring the collection of food scraps, and by continuing to support business food waste prevention and edible food donation program, Metro has taken one of the most significant actions possible to address climate change through its stewardship of the region's garbage and recycling system. And the work to recover food scraps is being done in tandem with extensive efforts to prevent food waste to begin with, and increase donation of edible and nutritious food. This is happening through long term relationships with the Oregon Food Bank, and partnerships with the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association.

In 2005, the City of Portland started a voluntary food scraps collection program. A few other jurisdictions followed suit with voluntary programs but by 2011, many jurisdictions still didn't offer food scraps collection programs to businesses. As a result, access to services was inconsistent across the region. This led to the Solid Waste Alternatives Advisory Committee (SWAAC) recommending to Metro Council, a move to a required food scraps collection program if certain benchmarks weren't met.

Metro began a project called the Solid Waste Roadmap. This was to help determine the path forward. The roadmap helped to identify opportunities to manage wastes differently, and to make the most of unwanted materials. The objective of the roadmap was to fulfill a number of public benefits: to protect the public's health, protect the environment, keep the commitment to the highest and best use of materials, and ensure that services were provided to all types of customers. As part of this process, Metro explored a variety of options to make better use of the region's garbage as a resource, and reduce the impacts of what is thrown away. After all of the region's hard work to reduce, re-use, recycle, and compost, and achieving a 60% recovery rate, the region was still projected to send more than 1.3 million tons of garbage to the landfill. Where Metro saw the greatest opportunity was food. Nearly one fifth of the region's garbage is food, and it is the single largest component in the waste stream.

In 2014, Metro Council directed staff to move forward with the development of policies or actions that ensure the region has sustainable food scraps recovery system. One that captures enough high quality material to make processing facilities economically viable. Since then, staff have worked to integrate these three elements into a stable and sustainable system for food scraps. That includes a mandatory business food scrap separation requirement, development of food scraps processing capacity and work towards refining the transfer system to provide efficient services throughout the region.

Ms. Stirnkorb clarified that the focus of this regional policy is on business food scraps. This is because over 55% of the food scraps being sent to the landfill come from businesses in the food industry, such as grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, hospitals. These food scraps tend to be clean and concentrated into larger quantities, rather than spread across the population in smaller quantities. Metro does also support the growth of the residential food programs.

Food waste prevention and donation are still the highest priority. However, there are always going to be those food scraps that cannot be prevented or donated, and would otherwise go to the landfill such as plate scrapings and inedible portions of food like bones and vegetable peelings. The program discussed today is focused on capturing these materials from businesses, and putting those food scraps that are left over to the highest use. Business Food Waste Policy, requires the region's local governments to adopt ordinances that require certain businesses to separate food scraps. The program will be rolled out in phases, and was originally scheduled to begin in March of 2020, but due to COVID-19 implementation's been delayed to March, 2022.

During the food scraps collection policy development process, the council decided that implementation of a disposal prohibition was necessary to strengthen the region's business food waste collection policy. Local government partners also supported this approach because the ban provides leverage in their efforts to assist businesses with implementing collection programs. Metro Council also adopted a resolution in July, 2020 which directs staff to develop Metro Code and Administrative Rule to prohibit the disposal of commercial food waste generated with an effective date of January, 2025.

One key policy element was consistent regional standards. For example, the region has a lot of restaurant chains that have businesses across the region, and they wanted to know that the requirements for their business in Beaverton were going to be the same as the requirements for their businesses in Wilsonville. Another key element was that policy enables local governments to give businesses a one year participation waiver. For some reason, if a business that can't comply, they have one year to be able to come into compliance. And lastly, there is significant flexibility for local governments in implementing a program. Local governments can implement the program in a manner that suits their local conditions, and increases their efficiencies as long as a program meets certain basic regional standards.

The program will be implemented in phases, starting with the largest and the midsize businesses first. Starting in March 2022, group one businesses - the largest food waste generators - will be required to comply. They'll need to be in compliance by March 2023. These businesses produce 1,000 pounds or more a week. Examples are grocery stores, large hospitals, very large restaurants. Group two, midsize businesses will also be required to begin implementation. They produce 500 pounds or more a week. Examples are larger restaurants and retirement facilities and have 18 months to reach compliance - March, 2022 until September, 2023. The third phase is smaller businesses producing 250 pounds or more a week. Smaller coffee shops and schools are in this category. The compliance period for them is September 2023 to September 2024.

There is a technical assistance campaign, which is called Food Waste Stops With Me. It launched in 2018, and it's a partnership between the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association, Oregon Food Bank, Oregon DEQ, and city and county governments. The goal of this partnership was to bring experts to the table to share knowledge and connect food service professionals to each other, resources, and technical assistance to help make positive change and reduce food waste. Metro's website is the portal for Food Waste Stops With Me, it will also connected to local government technical assistance.

Metro has detailed metrics developed to track program progress: the food waste requirement evaluation dashboard (FRED). This data tracks on a business by business basis who is in compliance with the requirement, if they have food waste prevention and donation practices in place, who provides collection service and host of other information that will be used to evaluate

the effectiveness of the program, tracking progress towards goals, and provide information to make program improvements.

Mr. Elder began sharing about the partnership between Metro at the Metro Central Transfer Station (MCS) and the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services, the Wastewater Treatment Facility for food scraps processing. In this project, staff are only talking about business food waste. The project plan is to take food waste and process it at the transfer station, where it will be transported to the Columbia Boulevard Waste Treatment Facility and convert it into renewable natural gas. This project is an outcome from Metro Council discussion that said Metro wanted to increase participation in the food scrap collection program. Metro had experienced various disruptions over the history of food collection processing, and wanted to make sure that was not going to be an issue. What that led to was an issuing of requests for proposals for processors to consider how they would manage the food waste received at Metro facilities. Metro entered into negotiations with Waste Management, Inc. and after about nine months of negotiation, both parties were unable to come to an agreement. The next step was to explore if Metro could process that material directly. Metro issued a special procurement for design of that facility, as well as a general contractor that would manage construction.

Mr. Elder shared the various components of processing:

1. MCS organics bay improvement. The bay was never designed to receive organics material, which is very acidic. Improvements are needed on that bay before processing equipment can be installed.
2. While making improvements to the MCS organics bay, the commercial organics and residential organics will need to go to other facilities. Suttle Road will be taking the commercial organics and haulers will have opportunities to either use them for their residential organics or other processors in the region.
3. The Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) needs to be finalized with the Bureau of Environmental Services.
4. Backup processing. There may be times where the digesters are unable to process material, and Metro may want to send it to compost. There may be times where Metro has excess materials.
5. Metro needs to arrange for the transport between MCS and Columbia Boulevard
6. Operational staff will be needed to manage the equipment and the process.

Currently, the contamination rate is only 3% by weight, which is great by most standards. Most jurisdictions experience around 25-30% contamination. There are two main options in the processing of the food waste:

1. The primary option will be to send the food through the slurry machine, and that slurry then would be loaded onto the truck where it would go to the Wastewater Treatment Facility. And there it is processed into the renewable natural gas.
2. Clean food waste could also go to compost where it would be turned into compost.

Metro has reached 30% design which is allowing Metro to begin with bid packages for design which will go out in December, and hopefully begin the evaluation and awarding process in January 2022. March and April is when Metro expects to start making those MCS bay improvements, which is when Metro will temporarily stop accepting organics. In July, staff hope to have the IGA finalized with Portland. That is the agreement that says how Metro and City of Portland will conduct this partnership. December 2022 is when Metro expects all the improvements to be finalized at MCS. However, it won't be until near the end of 2023 before Columbia Boulevard will be able to accept the slurry.

Arianne Sperry (City of Portland) asked about the time period where organics will not be accepted at MCS and sent to Suttle Road. She wondered what Recology is going to charge for the organics.

Mr. Elder responded that commercial organics are anticipated to be the same rate. Residential organics might be \$2 less a ton than what MCS charging. Metro will be monitoring this.

Alondra Flores Aviña asked if there will be collaborations with Oregon Green Schools or other organizations to help schools reach compliance. Other areas and neighborhoods, for example, like marginalized communities where David Douglas, Reynolds and Centennial schools don't have as much as support or resources.

Ms. Stirnkorb replied that the policy is being implemented as a regional effort. It is local governments and the ordinances in their area, and then they have staff that are working directly with businesses to assist in setting up the programs. For schools, this program is its back of house. There is a lot of work being done in partnership with local governments and Green Schools and other folks, to provide support for schools wherever it is needed.

Audrey O'Brien (DEQ) shared that DEQ does have Suttle Road on a DEQ solid waste permit and they are approved to accept food waste. She wanted to make sure that DEQ received all of the changes in the operations that are anticipated, and to work closely with Recology and Metro on making sure Suttle Road has updated their operations plan, and can address all the concerns that might arise from additional food waste going there. Columbia Boulevard does not have a solid waste permit, but does have a water quality permit. She wanted to check with the water quality program that the anaerobic digester will be able to meet all the performance standards necessary to accept the food waste at the digester, which now only accepts wastewater sludge. DEQ absolutely supports this effort and this way to address food waste. And want to make sure all the requirements are met.

Eben Polk (Clackamas County) asked how much more renewable natural gas is going to be generated as a result of directing food waste in this way. Does that value accrue back to Metro in the anaerobic disposal system or how is that going to be reflected within the agreement with BES? He also asked about this direction of materials into a system that produces bio-solids, and that there are some environmental trade-offs around bio-solids that have to be land applied to rural farmland. He wanted to know about the due diligence around the lifecycle trade-offs of bio-solids, especially with the increase of pharmaceuticals and other things in the wastewater supply that very little can be done about.

Mr. Elder shared that diverting the food waste from the landfill, there is a savings of about 30% that would be rogue methane emissions. That's the savings there from a greenhouse gas perspective. BES will get Renewable Identification Numbers (RINs) under the EPA's Renewable Fuel Standard Program. RINs are credits for the renewable natural gas and are the "currency" of the Renewable Fuel Standard program. That cost is built in the agreement. DEQ looked at a life cycle analysis of all different approaches. It wasn't a thorough study, but it was what directed us to go to anaerobic digestion over compost.

Peter Brandom (City of Hillsboro) wanted to raise the issue of transporting material to Portland from Hillsboro, which is a relatively long haul with significant fees. He wanted to revisit with this group so that we have some sense of how long the haulers in Hillsboro, and other parts of Washington County will have to send route trucks all the way to MCS or if there's some kind of interim solution that can help alleviate that.

Mr. Elder replied that Pride is able to accept the commercial food waste. However, they have not begun to accept. I think they're waiting for the food policy to really go into full effect before they start. That would alleviate some of the transportation, but Metro does recognize that this is one of those infrastructure needs.

6. FINAL REMARKS: Mr. Brower gave a few final remarks to the committee

MEETING AJOURNED at 10:30 a.m.