

Meeting: Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) Meeting
Date: Thursday, March 17, 2022
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 [check with Alondra but I think she is with Trash for Peace]
Bunsereyrithy Kong, Oregon Cambodian Buddhist Society
Lindsay Marshall, City of Tualatin
Shannon Martin, City of Gresham
Christa McDermott, Community Environmental Services, 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
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 8:34 am and previewed the agenda.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments from the public.

3. Garbage & Recycling System Facilities Plan

Roy Brower introduced Metro staff Estee Segal, Will Elder and Gloria Pinzon to present.

Key points of the presentation included:

Ms. Segal explained that today's purpose was to hear feedback on the engagement process surrounding the Garbage & Recycling System Facility Plan (GRSFP). She reviewed the goals and timeline of the GRSFP. Currently WPES is issuing RFPs for consultants to help staff and partners on this project. She summarized a pre-brief with community members regarding their input which included community stakeholder specifics, because planning work is hard to conceptualize. They felt this related to lack and lapse of services in the region. Committee members asked for defined values, and that Council asked for these values to evaluate success over time.

Mr. Elder reviewed the goal to have a community advisory group for this project, and start meeting May 2022. He presented the three questions previously posed to the group about how to form and engage a community advisory group for the GRSFP, and the preliminary framework for what Metro envisions for this group. He closed the presentation by sharing that a mapping of regional waste

plan values and how they relate to this plan will be shared out with the committee. In April, the team will ask for feedback on the values and outcomes.

Member Discussion Included:

Beth Vargas Duncan (ORRA) appreciated the goal to reach those groups who are less represented. She suggested a hauler member might not be on the advisory group, but finding a way for interested parties to participate in a more involved way than the general public, but not as much as the advisory committee. She explained that in previous roles she had meetings that included members, but also topic experts who could participate freely to help explain complex issues.

Mr. Brower added that meetings will hopefully shift to hybrid meetings with in person and virtual options as the pandemic progresses.

Audrey O'Brien (ODEQ) asked about periodic presentations and meetings with elected officials in specific areas where projects will happen. She really liked the focus of the services of the projects, and that she would see that people will engage on these topics.

Mr. Elder responded that Metro has met with elected officials in the past for West and South projects. Ms. Segal added that Metro engaged with more staff than elected officials about the South and West projects. She felt there wasn't as much engagement with elected officials as there could have been.

Peter Brandom (City of Hillsboro) supported Ms. O'Brien's comment. Hillsboro is very focused on services. Strongly encourages Metro to involve input from the county on this project. He would prefer that something is programmed into the process, so parties like his can feel more engaged and involved. He asked, what is the reason for the size of the advisory committee?

Mr. Elder responded that too large of a group can bog the process down. The odd number of members is to balance decisions. What does programming look like, and Metro will try and figure out what that looks like in the plan.

Bunsereyrythy Kong, Oregon Cambodian Buddhist Society suggested that materials on projects should be translated to other languages, because many people of color have language barriers, and aren't always involved in these projects.

Christa McDermott (PSU) suggested that Metro involve smaller, non-profit resellers in this process. Those who process items in reuse and thrift stores be included. Also that Q-sort tool was helpful learning tool to help evaluate lists of services.

Arianne Sperry (City of Portland) asked what the relationship with RWAC and this other group look like. How does Metro plan to include the Solid Waste Directors group? That group seems like an avenue to elected officials.

Mr. Elder responded that currently, having an RWAC member be in the new group is just an idea at this point, and that meeting on monthly meetings can create barriers, but being in two groups can allow for good idea sharing. He clarified that the person would not be a replacement for the project and team to engage with RWAC. As related to Solid Waste Directors, that seems like a more informal information sharing relationship, but agrees that it would be a good avenue to reach elected officials.

Gloria Pinzon wanted to make sure that the community advisory group hears from stakeholders and have that line of communication open to all. When a presentation or memo comes to RWAC it would include information from community members. If an RWAC member can come to the new group, they don't have to come every time.

4. Update on State Legislative Session and Federal Legislation

Roy Brower introduced Metro staff Scott Klag, Tyler Frisbee and Pam Peck.

Key points of the presentation included:

Pam Peck reviewed that the Regional Waste Plan provides policy direction at both the state and federal level. The Metro Council also sets policy priorities each year. Currently Metro is working on community engagement to prepare for the 2023 legislative session.

Scott Klag shared the results of the 2022 session. The bills relating to WPES were the Mattress EPR bill and updates to the bottle bill. Oregon becomes the fourth state with an EPR bill for mattresses. It is intended to be a drop off program, where a number of sites around the state have been established where people can drop mattresses off. There will be a period of rule writing at DEQ, followed by plan submittal that outlines standards, site locations, processors, and what is necessary to recover the cost of program with a fee. Once approved the program could be operational in early 2025.

Modifications to the bottle bill include provisions to ensure that all distributors are responsible. It also included wine in cans in the program. There is discussion that liquor could be included in the bill in the future. There are new requirements for the co-op to report back to the legislature each year. There was also updates to an Environmental Justice bill. The bill provides for staffing and membership, and it will provide resources for mapping tools. This allows for better understanding of environmental justice. There was a bill that requires seismic vulnerability assessments and this could impact Metro Central.

Tyler Frisbee shared an update on federal legislation. The House and Senate just passed the funding bill. If anyone was pursuing earmark funding, they were approved. The omnibus fully funded the bipartisan infrastructure bill that authorized higher funding levels for existing programs, and a few new programs. EPA, USDA, USDOT will now be able to start working on programs, and grants will start to be sent out. Build Back Better is dead. Parts of that bill will be pulled out and pushed forward separately. Most likely this will not include items related to waste and recycling. The majority of the recycling opportunities are related to research and development opportunities, ex) how do we recycle batteries? EPA currently has a pollution prevention program open, local governments can apply and partner. There is a food waste and composting program that USDA will start work on soon, generally this will need to have an agricultural connection. Recycling infrastructure program is a new program, to improve recycling systems, as well as a recycle education program. The programs are being shaped and will roll out later this year.

Member Discussion Included:

Ms. McDermott asked why haven't wine and liquor been included in the bottle bill previously?

Mr. Klag responded that people are asking why doesn't the bill include everything in a can, which includes seltzers? Wine traditionally has not been because it is liquor. Liquor hasn't been included because of the system of sale we have in Oregon. This would include involving OLCC in the co-op. Wine hasn't been distributed in cans much until lately,

5. Regional Refresh Fund

Roy Brower introduced Metro staff Cayla Pruett.

Key points of the presentation included:

Cayla gave an update on the program now that it has completed its first year. This program started late spring of 2021. A landing page was developed with the digital FAQ, simplified the application and included an equity focus. Outreach efforts have been underway and the number of applications have increased. All materials are also available in Spanish. This program is meant to be flexible and accessible to provide funds to underserved neighborhoods and communities. There has been feedback that the process is straightforward and simple. Cayla reviewed the goals of the program which include: enhance community relationships, improve solid waste service equity in the region and improve livability for vulnerable populations. RRF has received 36 applications and has approved 25 applications. Most applicant denials are because of lack of fiscal sponsor, or the project is outside the scope of the program. The primary way funds are spent include; disposal fees at transfer station or recyclers, transportation costs to dispose of waste, collection equipment (dumpsters, sharps containers, bags), supplies for volunteers, compensating partners or vendors helping with the event or project, and promotional or educational materials. This program is in partnership with Metro Paint, so any organization that is approved is eligible for a free paint donation from Metro Paint, for projects such as graffiti abatement etc. There a several projects scheduled for spring. Program data is being tracked to evaluate success.

Member Discussion Included:

Ms. Sperry asked about groups who aren't associated with a non-profit.

Ms. Pruett responded that she has really been focusing on this, and trying to find an organization willing to be a fiscal sponsor for applicants without one.

Mr. Brower asked if a local government could be a fiscal sponsor.

Ms. Pruett responded they could. It really boils down to who is responsible for the funds because Metro can't write a check to an individual.

Mr. Kong asked if the Oregon Cambodian Center could apply for its annual cleanup.

Ms. Pruett responded that projects have to be in an equity focused area, an environmentally sensitive area, or an underserved area. The website has a neighborhood grid that shows equity focus areas.

Ms. Vargas Duncan asked if the RRF is receiving funding from Metro Paint.

Ms. Pruett replied that the funding is separate, and working in tandem.

Mr. Brower added that there have been recent state funds that will be added to RRF.

Ms. McDermott asked if there might be a future expansion of the \$5,000 cap to accommodate ongoing services.

Ms. Pruett responded that the \$5,000 cap is for each unique project, so a single organization could apply for more than one. If it were for a repeat project it would have to wait until a new quarter. The program will undergo some revisions, but not sure what that looks like yet. Metro itself is also not a hauler, so can't supply regular services.

Mr. Brower noted that we have other programs such as RID that serve houseless communities on an ongoing basis, as well as the trash bag program.

Ms. McDermott suggested that it would be nice to see a non-profit distribute bags so RID isn't overly taxed. She also suggested that haulers or transfer stations could waive or donate fees for this type of work, so more could be done for these type of efforts.

Sharetta Butcher agreed.

Mr. Brower replied that RID is ramping up its crews the next few months.

Peter Brandom asked if the funds can only be spent in the service district boundary.

Ms. Pruett responded that it has to be spent in the Metro boundary of the three counties.

6. Budget Engagement Calendar

Roy Brower presents.

Key Points of the Presentation:

Mr. Brower explains that budget engagement involves law and Council requirements. Metro has been involved in an effort to be more transparent on the budget process. He reviewed the timeline that includes Metro Council sessions, and engagement opportunities where the public can participate. Upcoming events include a Council work session on March 31, 2022, and public forums, one on April 5, 2022, April 7, 2022 and April 14, 2022. May 26, 2022 the Tax Supervising and Conservation commission will hold a public hearing on Metro budget, and on June 9, 2022 Metro Council will have final review and allow final public testimony. Fees are expected to be set by late April 2022.

Member Discussion Included:

Mr. Brandom asked if these details and schedule could be shared out to the group.

Mr. Brower confirmed that the summary will be provided to all.

Ms. Vargas Duncan asked if solid waste fees will change between April and June.

Mr. Brower acknowledged this concern. He explained that three scenarios will be suggested to Council on March 31, and if Council amends those, there could be some impact on the fees but that once fees are set by Council in April, they will not change again until next year

Ms. McDermott asked if there are other ways to advocate to fund facilities.

Mr. Brower suggested that people can always write into Councilors as the best way to engage with the COO.

Ms. Sperry asked if staff can take into consideration the options taken to council focus on solid fee for fiscal year 22-23, as this is very important to haulers.

Mr. Brower encouraged attendance at March 31, 2022 session because it will set the policy direction on fee adoption for this year and include the plan for the next five years.

7. Final Remarks

Mr. Brower put forth the January and February meeting minutes for approval. Ms. McDermott motioned to approve the January minutes, Alondra Flores-Avina seconded. January minutes approved. Ms. Butcher motioned to approve the February minutes. Thao Tu seconded. February minutes approved. Mr. Brower gave a few final remarks to the committee.

MEETING AJOURNED at 10:30 a.m.