

STAFF REPORT

WASTE PREVENTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: BULKY WASTE POLICY PROJECT UPDATE

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Department: WPES

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Length: 45 mins

ISSUE STATEMENT

During the creation of the FY23-24 budget, Council directed the Waste Prevention and Environmental Services department to provide ongoing information on regional waste priorities to inform future Council direction on the annual WPES budget and regional waste fees. WPES has refined its Council engagement strategy to include additional touchpoints to review technical information to support key decisions and seek additional guidance on Council priorities. These engagements also provide additional context to support Council decisions on the Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan that will provide direction on future infrastructure investments.

This work session is the opportunity for Metro Council to get an update on work of the Bulky Waste Policy project, a collaborative policy planning project with local governments, and introductory information on the Multifamily Bulky Waste Collection Study, also known as the pilot, currently occurring in Gresham. The purpose of the project is to implement 2030 Regional Waste Plan guidance to establish consistent and regularly occurring bulky waste service with an emphasis on multifamily communities and lower income households.

ACTION REQUESTED

No formal action is requested at this time. This work session will provide an update on the scope and current status of the Bulky Waste Policy Project.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Does the Council wish to advise staff on anything related to the Bulky Waste Policy Project at this time?
- What additional information does Council need from staff to support a future work session on Bulky Waste Policy?

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Regional Service Standard

Metro code sets the base level of service for all local government recycling collection programs in greater Portland, and it includes standards for education and services for residents and businesses. This is referred to as the Regional Service Standard that includes

rules established in Metro code and administrative rules for garbage and recycling collection standards. In 2021, the rules were updated to address inequities in multifamily housing by establishing minimum collection standards for garbage and recycling and require consistent recycling bin colors and signage. Additionally, the Regional Service Standards sets a requirement for regularly occurring bulky waste collection for multifamily residences. The Bulky Waste Policy Project is bringing partners together to develop consistent, affordable, and convenient bulky waste collection services for multifamily households in the greater Portland area by July 1, 2025.

Bulky Waste Policy Project

The Bulky Waste Policy Project builds on previous Council direction and is taking a close look at the bulky waste collection services currently available for multifamily and single-family homes, with an emphasis on multifamily services, where additional barriers are present in accessing bulky waste collection service. Bulky waste, sometimes called large household items, are items such as tables, couches and mattresses that are too large to fit in a standard garbage and recycling bin.

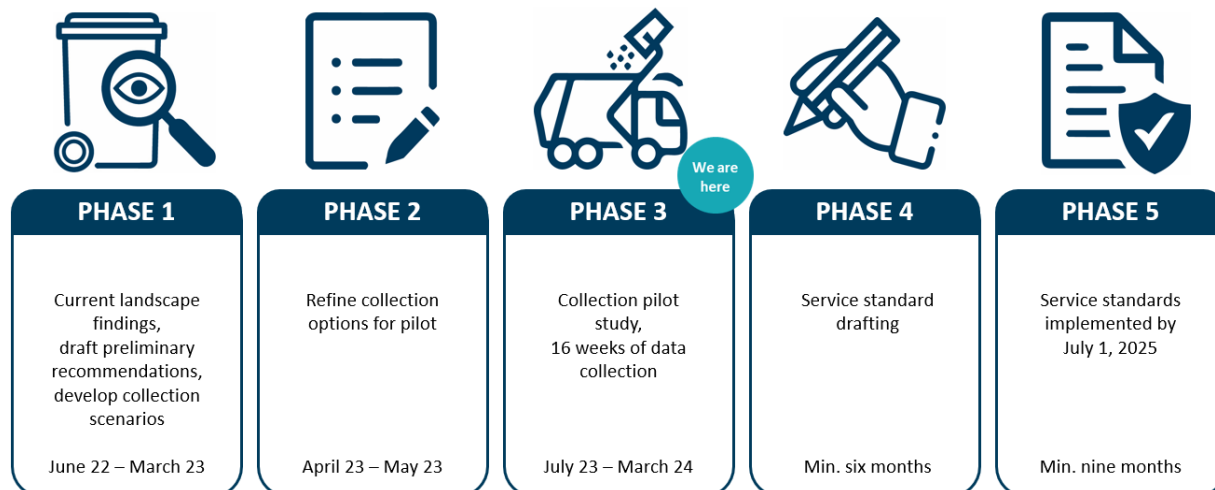
Current Levels of Service for Multifamily and Single-Family

Currently, garbage and recycling collectors in all cities and counties provide bulky waste collection service for an additional fee at the request of the account holder. Account holders are usually single-family homeowners or property owners or managers. A handful of cities provide an annual bulky waste collection to single-family homes or an annual drop-off day for all residents embedded in the rate as a part of regular garbage and recycling service.

On the multifamily side, the property manager is usually the account holder and authorizes charges to the account. In most cases, tenants are not able to access bulky waste collection services for an additional fee from their certificated, franchised or licensed collector because they are dependent on the property manager for information about, access to and approval of the charges. There are no jurisdiction-wide multifamily bulky waste collection services offered as part of garbage and recycling service in greater Portland. Some local collection companies will schedule and take payment directly from tenants and there are successful property-specific, local examples where collection companies and property manager have agreements in place to regularly pick up bulky waste at those properties.

Project Timeline

The project is broken across five phases of work. Phase one was completed last winter and assessed the current landscape and engaged with community members, property managers and collection companies. The purpose of phase two engagement was to better understand their perspectives by collecting feedback on three potential bulky waste collection scenarios and one status quo scenario. All audiences recognized issues with the current system and saw value in a regularly occurring, consistent approach. All audiences also identified cost as the key issue in considering future services, as well as space constraints on multifamily properties for the service.



Phase one findings

From the research and engagement work conducted in phase one the Metro and local government project team identified three major barriers within the current landscape and four opportunities to leverage in considering bulky waste collection service.

- Barriers
 - Lack of adequate vehicle to self-haul large unwanted household items.
 - Lack of direct access for tenants to collection services provided by collection companies regulated by local governments via certificate, franchise or license.
 - Variability in multiple dimensions for bulky waste collection including materials collected, services provided, cost and space constraints and for people living in multifamily homes this variability is magnified by high turnover of residents in rental units and property managers.
- Opportunities:
 - Local governments and Metro can lead in service equity for people living in multifamily homes.
 - Minimum consistent elements will reduce current service variability while retaining flexibility for local governments to implement these services in their local communities.
 - The certificated, franchised and licensed collection system currently provides similar services.
 - Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for mattresses will be established in Oregon and should alleviate mattress disposal costs.

Phase two findings and phase three pilot study:

In phase two, the project also aimed to model costs of various multifamily and single-family collection scenarios. The project team was unable to obtain data to inform what the cost

should be for regularly occurring multifamily bulky waste services. This in turn shifted the objectives and outcomes of the phase three pilot from ground testing potential collection standards to gathering a robust and reliable dataset on multifamily bulky waste generation and estimating the cost of an on-route multifamily bulky waste collection service.

The Multifamily Bulky Waste Collection Study, also known as, “the pilot,” is taking place from Oct. 1, 2023, through Jan. 19, 2024, at 40 multifamily properties in Gresham. Each property is visited weekly by their franchised collection company. Cost and material generation data will be tracked to inform future policy choices.

Each property will be visited three times throughout the pilot to raise participant awareness of the service. Flyers in English and Spanish are left at each tenant’s door. Additionally, a large sign has been placed at each site to show where materials are to be placed for collection. The flyers and the sign include a QR code for participants to use to find additional information in Arabic, English, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. More details on the pilot study will be shared during the presentation.

NEXT STEPS

Staff plan to return to Council in mid-2024 once analysis is complete of the data gathered in the pilot.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A