

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 25-5459, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING THE REGIONAL SYSTEM FACILITIES PLAN

Date: March 6, 2025

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Department: Waste Prevention and Environmental Services (WPES)

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Meeting date: March 20, 2025

Length: 45 mins

ISSUE STATEMENT

The Regional System Facilities Plan has been developed to guide facility and program investments that reduce garbage, improve service quality and access, and keep services affordable. Taking a holistic view of the regional system, the plan identifies key infrastructure needs, including new facilities, renovations, and partnerships to strengthen waste management services. Metro Council is asked to adopt this plan, which will help shape future capital investments to address system gaps and modernize the region's reuse, recycling, and garbage infrastructure.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff is seeking approval of Resolution 25-5459 for the Purpose of Adopting the Regional System Facilities Plan.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The values and principles of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan were foundational to the development of the Regional System Facilities Plan. Three goals from the 2030 Regional Waste Plan are directly related to this plan:

- Goal 8: Increase the reuse, repair and donation of materials and consumer products.
- Goal 10: Provide regionally consistent services for garbage, recyclables and other priority materials that meet the needs of all users.
- 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.

A set of values and outcomes were developed specific to the Regional System Facilities Plan and Metro Council prioritized three priority outcomes:

- Waste reduction: New facilities and programs should focus on reducing waste and the amount of materials that go to landfill.
- Increased access: Improve the quality and access to reuse, recycling and garbage services across the region.

- Affordability: Keep services affordable and cost impacts to residents' low.

POLICY QUESTION

Does the Regional System Facilities Plan align with Metro Council's priorities and include the investments necessary to improve the reuse, recycling composting and garbage system over the next 20 years?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

1. Adopt the Resolution – Adoption would endorse the System Facilities Plan as the guide for future capital investments for the reuse, recycling, composting, and garbage system.
2. Request Revisions Before Adoption – Adoption would be delayed allowing for modifications based on Council input. A revised plan would then be brought back to Metro Council for further consideration.
3. Do Not Adopt the Resolution – Without adoption, there would be no agreed-upon plan to guide future capital investments in the reuse, recycling, composting, and garbage system.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Following more than two years of engagement, research, assessment, scenario planning, and cost modeling, staff recommends that Council adopt Resolution 25-5459 Adopting the Regional System Facilities Plan.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The Regional System Facilities Plan project has looked at the region's existing public, private and non-profit garbage, recycling and reuse infrastructure, identified service gaps, and presented potential approaches and a draft plan for future system investments. Specifically, the project has produced over the last two years:

- An overview of the facility-based garbage, recycling and reuse services necessary for achieving the goals of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan.
- The current and anticipated gaps in those services.
- Alternative scenarios for the public, private and non-profit sectors to fill the gaps or mitigate the need to fill them over the next 20 years.
- An implementation plan and financing options for Metro's role in advancing the plan and building new facilities.

If adopted by Metro Council, the plan will help guide Metro's future investment in facilities and infrastructure and help to close the gap between those with access to services and those without.

BACKGROUND

Metro has developed the Regional System Facilities Plan to guide future investments in garbage, recycling, and reuse infrastructure across the region. Over the past 2.5 years, staff have conducted extensive research, engaged diverse stakeholders, and collaborated with Metro Council to shape a plan that modernizes the system, improves service access, and supports regional waste reduction goals.

The planning process was structured in five phases, beginning with identifying system gaps and challenges, exploring alternative investment scenarios, and refining Metro's role in facility-based services. Informed by over 40 advisory committee meetings, industry roundtables, and community engagement efforts, the plan reflects input from local governments, private industry, nonprofits, and community groups. Metro also invited consultation with Tribes who have engaged with Metro in the past, to seek input from them during the planning process and future implementation. A key component was a 2023 symposium, where over 120 participants helped shape investment priorities. Through an iterative process, Metro Council has reviewed scenarios, discussed policy trade-offs, and provided direction on investments that prioritize waste reduction, address geographic inequities, and ensure affordable services.

Metro released the draft plan for public review in October 2024, receiving over 90 comments from individuals, local governments, and industry representatives. Public feedback broadly supported the plan's direction and investment strategy, leading to refinements such as prioritizing an East Multnomah County depot, exploring partnerships with existing private facilities, and clarifying the role of the Regional Waste Advisory Committee in implementation. Council reviewed the final draft of the plan in December 2024 and referred the plan to the newly reorganized Regional Waste Advisory Committee to provide input prior to adoption. The new committee reviewed the plan in January and provided feedback in February 2025.

At the February 2025 Regional Waste Advisory meeting, committee members expressed their overall support for the projects outlined in Phase 1 of the plan, except for the reuse mall, which they believe needs more study and a cost-benefit analysis. Multiple members expressed support for exploring a smaller reuse mall concept in an existing underutilized space, in partnership with reuse businesses. Committee members also thought that organics investments and assessing the wet waste tonnage policy should be given higher priority in Phase 1. When asked what Metro Council should take into consideration when considering the plan for adoption, many committee members advised to carefully evaluate project costs given the current economic landscape, potential impact on individuals and the combined effects of rising utility costs. Committee members also advised that Metro take opportunities to be innovative with managing materials like organics, continue leveraging public-private partnerships as much as possible, and continue to educate the public on waste reduction and consumption. Staff will review changes to the plan based on committee input in the staff presentation and details of the committee discussion are provided in Attachment 2.

Metro Council is now asked to consider adopting the plan, which will guide capital investments and policy decisions to create a more resilient, accessible, and sustainable waste system for the region.

NEXT STEPS

The conceptual schedule and phasing will guide the implementation of the investment strategy. Prior to initiating each facility or program investment project, staff will further define the components of the individual project, areas that need additional refinement or assessment. This plan will detail project components, staffing, costs and specific engagement steps. Project proposals will be reviewed by the Regional Waste Advisory Committee and Metro Council. Approval for costs will be considered in the annual Metro budget process.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Regional System Facilities Plan, Phase 4 draft plan engagement report
Attachment 2: Regional Waste Advisory Committee, 2/27/25 draft meeting minutes