

## WASTE PREVENTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES FY2025-26 BUDGET ENGAGEMENT REPORT OUT

Date: April 28, 2025  
Department: Waste Prevention and  
Environmental Services  
Meeting Date: May 8, 2025  
Length: 45 minutes

Prepared by: Carly Tabert, Policy Coordinator  
Presenter: Metro Councilor Mary Nolan; Marta  
McGuire, Waste Prevention and Environmental  
Services Director; Patrick Dennis, Finance  
Manager

---

### ISSUE STATEMENT

Waste Prevention and Environmental Services is actively working to improve transparency and shared understanding of the budget development and fee-setting process. As a part of this effort, the department engaged with the Regional Waste Advisory Committee and hosted a virtual budget forum that included elected officials, local government staff, industry stakeholders, and reuse sector representatives. Input gathered through both the advisory committee and the forum will be shared with Metro Council to inform budget and fee adoption. Staff will also share updates on the proposed solid waste fees and budget considerations.

### ACTION REQUESTED

Staff asks Metro Council to consider the input from these budget engagements to inform the adoption of the FY2025-26 budget and solid waste fees and identify any additional information need to inform budget and fee adoption.

### IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Council will consider adoption of the FY2025–26 budget and solid waste fees to support the outcomes of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan, reflecting a regionwide approach that prioritizes human health, environmental protection, and the responsible management of the region’s waste through equitable services and strategic investments.

### BUDGET AND FEE ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE AND SUMMARY

#### Regional Waste Advisory Committee

The Regional Waste Advisory Committee is a policy level committee that advises Metro Council on the management of the garbage and recycling system including providing input on the Waste Prevention and Environmental Services budget and solid waste fees. The committee held three focused discussions between February 2025 and April 2025.

Committee members participated in a structured input exercise using the red-yellow-green feedback framework. Members were asked to assess the proposal by identifying areas of strong alignment (green), areas requiring clarification or potential adjustment (yellow), and areas of concern or potential misalignment (red). Each member was asked to select their top two priorities in each color category to focus the discussion on the most critical issues, while also having the opportunity to submit additional comments beyond their initial selections. This approach was designed to focus dialogue, elevate key themes, and collect meaningful input to inform Metro Council’s final budget and fee decisions.

The input collected through this process was collected, logged and organized into major themes based on the committee's input. The following section summarizes the common areas of support, questions, and concerns identified across all red, yellow, and green comments.

### Strong Alignment with Regional Outcomes

1. **Provision of Essential Services:** Continued investment in household hazardous waste collection services, dumped garbage cleanup, and community education is widely supported.
2. **System Facilities Plan Phasing and Investments:** Agreement that the phased approach to implementing community depots and other infrastructure investments reflect thoughtful planning and is aligned with equity and service goals.
3. **Reuse and Waste Prevention Investments:** Strong support for the Reuse Impact Fund and partnerships that support waste prevention, reuse infrastructure, and livable-wage jobs.
4. **Fee Stability and Investment Model:** Support for future consideration of a fee model that balances affordability with long-term investment.

### Areas of Adjustment or Further Consideration

1. **Staffing for System Facilities Plan:** Questions about the scale and timing of the proposed 3 FTE; some suggested exploring 2 FTE or phased additions.
2. **Cost Management Opportunities:** Interest in exploring scaled-back, phased service delivery, especially for programs like MetroPaint and household hazardous waste and further evaluating program costs and administrative overhead.
3. **Fee Structure Clarity:** Request for more transparent communication about how fee increases are calculated and how they compare regionally.

### Areas of Concern or Misalignment

1. **Equity & Transparency:** Concern about geographic and financial equity, particularly regarding equitable access to services, how fees are distributed and need for deeper engagement with local governments.
2. **Solid Waste Fee Increase:** Concern about the 11% increase and potential impacts on small haulers, nonprofits, and illegal dumping.
3. **Tonnage Assumptions:** Questions about how tonnage declines will affect long-term revenue and whether capital investments align with those trends.
4. **Level of Reuse Investment:** Concern on potential decreased investment in reuse with sunset of Innovation and Investment grant program.

The complete advisory report is attached for Council reference.

### Regional Budget Forum

Waste Prevention and Environmental Services hosted a virtual budget forum to present the proposed FY 2025–26 budget and solid waste fees. The forum offered an opportunity for local jurisdictions, community organizations, and industry representatives—particularly those not represented on the advisory committee—to ask questions and provide input on the department's priorities, progress, and strategic investments.

The facilitated listening session focused on hearing participants' questions, ensuring that attendees have the information they need to engage with Metro Council as we move into the budget deliberation process. Attendees raised questions and offered input across four key areas:

- **Clarity on Budget Components:** Participants sought greater clarity on the Metro Central Services budget, staffing levels, internal service charges for grants and local government funding, and how those costs are shared across Metro.
- **Questions on Staffing Levels and Alternatives:** Input included inquiries about whether current staffing levels are right-sized for programs like RID, youth education, and household hazardous waste—and whether some Regional System Facilities Plan functions could be delivered without increasing staffing and if there are potential alternative funding options. There was also a request for more detailed analysis of how lower regional system fee increases would impact operations.
- **Long-Term Capital Planning:** Attendees expressed interest in understanding the multi-year funding plan for the Regional System Facilities Plan and how costs will be phased into the Regional System Fee over time.
- **Encouragement for Broader Engagement with Local Governments:** Participants strongly encouraged Metro Council to have additional conversations with local government partners to better understand the local impacts of the proposed budget and fee decisions.

#### **PROPOSED BUDGET AND SOLID WASTE FEES**

Staff presented the proposed budget and associated solid waste fees on April 15, 2025, to Metro Council. At the May 8, 2025, Council meeting, staff will present updates to the proposed fees including: 1) refinements to the fees based on third party review for consistent methodology of the fee model and 2) proposed adjustments and considerations based on input received through the Regional Waste Advisory Committee and budget forum.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Advisory Report from Regional Waste Advisory Committee