

# Metro Garbage & Recycling System Facilities Plan Phase 2 Engagement Summary Report

*Convenience. Access. Affordability.  
Everyone, no matter where they live in the  
region, should have equitable access to  
garbage and recycling facilities and  
services. But to get there, we need a plan.*

## Overview

Metro is developing a Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan to understand the investments needed to ensure better access to services in our garbage and recycling system. The project will look at the region's current public, private and non-profit garbage, recycling and reuse infrastructure, identify service gaps, and present potential approaches and a plan for future system investments.





Future investments may include construction of new facilities, incorporation of new services in existing facilities and identifying non-facility-based alternatives in some cases.

Throughout the plan development, Metro is engaging potentially affected and interested individuals, communities and organizations, as well as local governments, businesses, reuse organizations and advocacy organizations. Additionally, several Metro advisory groups are providing input at key decision points.

This report summarizes the engagement completed in Phase 2 from September 2022 to January 2023. The work in this phase was focused on outreach to diverse audiences to help identify gaps and facility needs in the regional garbage and recycling system.



## PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT: WHAT WE DID

 Outreach	 Summarize	 Analyze	 Share
Activities: Roundtables Committee Meetings Internal Meetings Follow up Surveys Invitations to engage with Tribal Governments	6 summaries were completed to describe what we heard from different audiences	All comments and identified system gaps were organized into themes	The findings from Phase 2 summarized here will inform the technical analysis and Phase 3 work

Between September and December 2022, Metro made presentations and facilitated discussions with advisory groups, convened four virtual roundtable discussions and conducted numerous engagements with Metro garbage and recycling program and facility staff. Audiences reached included people from Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties, and the process prioritized and uplifted historically and currently marginalized communities.

Audience	Activity	Participation
Community Advisory Group	Meetings (Sept. 19, Oct. 18, Dec. 12)	8 members
Reuse/Repair businesses	Roundtable (Oct. 4)	19 participants
Community partners	Roundtable (Oct. 6)	12 participants
Local government	Roundtable (Oct. 31)	28 participants
Private industry	Roundtable (Nov. 3)	30 participants
All Roundtable invitees	Online follow-up survey	16 responses
Metro Waste Prevention and Environmental Services program and facility staff	Team meetings Metro facility site visits Follow-up survey	4 virtual meetings 9 on-site meetings 27 responses
Tribal governments	Letter of introduction; invitation to consult (Sept)	7 letters sent to Tribes in Oregon and Washington

### Garbage and Recycling Community Advisory Group

The Community Advisory Group comprised of community members who are impacted by the plan outcomes and who represent historically and currently marginalized communities, met during Phase 2 to discuss:

- Plan development and how they currently use the garbage and recycling system, including gaps they recognized
- Which parts of the system were working well or could be improved upon
- Equity impacts that Metro should consider in the project
- Review of input received from other key stakeholders during the Roundtables

### **Roundtable Meetings**

Metro convened virtual meetings for each of four external stakeholder groups including: reuse and repair businesses, staff and community members from community-based organizations, local governments, and garbage and recycling private industry representatives. Each roundtable included a presentation about the project purpose and goals followed by interactive breakout sessions where participants in smaller groups responded to a series of discussion questions around their area of expertise and experience with the current garbage and recycling system. Discussions focused on identifying and understanding system facility gaps and related concerns and observations from community members. Participants shared ideas and preferences for future improvements to the garbage and recycling system. Invitees were offered language translation during the meeting and a follow-up survey to provide additional input after the roundtable meeting.

### **Metro Staff Engagement**

Metro Waste Prevention and Environmental Services staff, both program and policy staff, as well as front line staff working at Metro transfer stations, Metro Paint, and the RID Deployment Center were invited to provide input on gaps and needs related to facilities and infrastructure in the garbage and recycling system. Follow up opportunities included a survey and voting exercise for facility staff.

### **Presentations to Advisory Groups**

Presentations on plan development were given to each of the advisory groups and participants were invited to provide input on facility gaps and the future of the garbage and recycling system. The groups included:

- Regional Waste Advisory Committee
- Committee on Racial Equity
- Metro Policy Advisory Committee
- Metropolitan Mayor's Consortium

### **Tribal Consultation**

In addition, in September 2022, a letter was sent from Metro Council President Peterson to seven Tribes to introduce the project, its goals and invite consultation by Tribal leaders. Letters were sent to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs,

Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Nez Perce Tribe, and Cowlitz Indian Tribe. To date, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe has expressed interest in learning more about this project and to discuss where there might be areas of mutual interest between the Tribe and Metro’s garbage and recycling work. An in-person meeting with the Cowlitz Public Works Director, Metro’s Tribal Policy Advisor, and Metro staff took place in mid-January 2023.

## PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT: WHAT WE LEARNED

Input on the gaps generated in the community advisory group, roundtable discussions and staff engagements were collected, logged in a spreadsheet, coded and sorted into themes. More than 800 comments were recorded including both comments on facility and infrastructure gaps and general comments about the system. Those comments related to issues that cannot be addressed by facility infrastructure investments will be shared with Metro leadership and incorporated into relevant projects that are underway as part of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan implementation.

Of the comments collected from engagement specifically related to facility and infrastructure gaps, six major themes emerged:

1. General residential self-haul
2. Bulky waste, reuse and repair drop-off
3. Hard-to-recycle items
4. Amenities at transfer facilities or other needed facilities
5. Household hazardous waste
6. Reuse and repair warehouse hubs

Additional details and comments specific to these themes, collected through recent engagements, are highlighted below.

### 1. General residential self-haul

Theme	Comments
<b>Need for more places throughout the Metro region for self-haul household waste.</b>	<p>The Metro Transfer Stations are overcrowded, and people travel far to get to them because they are two of the three transfer stations that take general self-haul. The private transfer station takes general self-haul but charges rates that are much higher.</p> <p>Facilities need to better accommodate residential self-haul customers. There is currently limited capacity for residents, which is a critical need.</p>

	<p>There is a need for more transfer stations, spread equally throughout the region, and that offer education about waste reduction and recovery.</p> <p>There is a lack of access to facilities that provide affordable services for residents, especially in Washington &amp; east Multnomah Counties.</p>
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## 2. Bulky waste, reuse and repair drop-off

Theme	Comments
<b>Need for centralized locations with adequate space to drop-off large household items (furniture, appliances) and other items for reuse and repair.</b>	<p>It's difficult to find donation centers that will consistently accept large reuse items like couches and mattresses.</p> <p>Facilities that offer repair services and storage for reusable items are needed.</p> <p>Transporting bulky waste (large household items) to facilities for reuse or repair is a barrier for many residents, especially those without trucks.</p> <p>There is a need for more facilities that support material recovery and reduce waste.</p>

## 3. Hard-to-recycle items

Theme	Comments
<b>Need for more places throughout the Metro region to take hard-to-recycle items, such as old clothes, medicines, sharps, construction waste.</b>	<p>Batteries, sharps construction waste (especially asbestos containing) and hazardous waste are all difficult to get rid of due to too few facilities that accept these materials.</p> <p>People don't know which facilities or where facilities are located that take hard-to-recycle materials, and people would like to have one place to that accepts all of these items.</p> <p>Residents need places throughout the region to dispose of medicines and batteries</p> <p>Reuse and recycling facilities for construction materials are lacking on the east and west sides of the region.</p>

#### 4. Amenities at transfer facilities or other needed facilities

Theme	Comments
<b>Need for improvements at existing facilities.</b>	<p>There is a lack of space at existing garbage and recycling facilities to separate and store unwanted items that could be reused.</p> <p>Facilities need to better accommodate residential self-haul customers, including providing physical assistance for those who can't lift items and/or programs or discounts for staff, seniors and people living with low incomes or disabilities.</p> <p>More sites need to offer asbestos testing to allow for easier reuse of building materials and prevent contamination. Currently only Waste Management in Hillsboro can dispose of asbestos.</p> <p>Many haulers rely on the Metro transfer station truck wash stations which are being removed. Private facilities don't offer this.</p>
<b>Need for other facilities.</b>	<p>More facilities that are easily accessible and can take items for recycling, reuse, repair, and distribution</p> <p>Facilities equipped to handle debris from emergencies and natural disasters.</p> <p>Private transfer station operators would like to capture more of the waste stream currently processed at Metro-owned facilities and feel they could operate more efficiently than the public sector.</p> <p>Composting facilities, especially for food waste composting, are needed in order to meet regional and statewide waste reduction &amp; carbon goals.</p>

#### 5. Household hazardous waste

Theme	Comments
<b>Need for more places throughout the Metro region that collect household hazardous waste.</b>	<p>There is a need for more neighborhood-based household hazardous waste disposal options throughout the region, even in areas that already have a transfer station to collect it.</p> <p>Need bigger and better planned household hazardous waste facilities than what is currently available at Metro South and Central (need larger covered area, more storage area, loading dock, etc.).</p>

	<p>Illegal dumping of household hazardous waste is of special concern since this waste has the potential to contaminate nearby land and water sources.</p> <p>There is only one facility in the region that accepts asbestos, and its location in Hillsboro can be a barrier.</p>
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## 6. Reuse and repair warehouse hubs

Theme	Comments
<b>Need for centralized locations with adequate warehouse space for sorting and storing reuse and repair items.</b>	<p>Physical space for warehousing, sorting and storage of reuse materials is lacking, causing reuse items to be landfilled depending on space.</p> <p>Centralized locations for people to drop off or shop for reuse materials is lacking.</p> <p>The space for offering repair services and to host fairs is lacking.</p> <p>Reuse/repair infrastructure is not as developed on the Westside as it is in Portland, which has organizations like the Rebuilding Center.</p>

## SUMMARY BY GROUP

### Community Advisory Group

The focus of these meetings was to identify and understand the impact of gaps experienced by group members. Metro also received advice from this group on racial equity considerations related to service and facility gaps. Specific gaps identified included affordability, lack of facilities to take residential organics for composting for those without collection service, the need for physical assistance at facilities for those who cannot lift items and lack of facilities that offer repair services and storage for reusable items.

### Reuse and Repair Businesses and Organizations

The focus of this roundtable meeting was to identify infrastructure or facilities needed to support more reuse and repair in the greater Portland region. Specific gaps that were identified included physical space for warehousing, sorting and storage of reuse materials; centralized locations for people to drop off or shop for reuse materials; transportation of large items for people without vehicles; and places or hubs for reuse organizations to share tools and equipment.

### **Community Organizations**

The focus of this roundtable meeting was to identify the garbage, recycling, reuse and repair service gaps from the perspective of historically underrepresented community members. Members identified barriers to access services including inconsistent composting service, information in non-English languages, age and income barriers. Participants also expressed concerns about specific items that are difficult to get to places to reuse or recycle, such as furniture, Styrofoam, appliances, bulky items and medical sharps.

### **Local Governments**

The focus of this roundtable meeting was to understand the garbage, recycling, reuse and repair needs in each local jurisdiction and to identify facility investments that could advance shared work towards 2030 Regional Waste Plan goals. Generally, we heard about geographic gaps related to facilities, especially in Washington County and east Multnomah County, and access gaps like affordability and travel time to self-haul and recycling facilities and services. Local government partners pointed out the lack of industrial land available for new facilities. Local government partners would like Metro to strengthen regionwide partnerships for facility siting, clean up events, facility closures, and address other gaps like system resilience.

### **Garbage and Recycling Industry Businesses and Organizations**

The focus of this roundtable meeting was to hear from private industry representatives, including transfer station operators, commercial haulers and third-party haulers, about the gaps in the current system. Participants identified gaps including disposal services for asbestos, metal drop-off, and storage space for hard-to-recycle items, and specific gaps around amenities needed at Metro transfer stations and the handling of reuse items.

### **Metro WPES Staff**

A series of meetings was conducted for both Metro program and policy staff as well as operational staff at facilities. The first set of meetings focused on staff that work on policy and program teams in education, waste reduction, asset management, as well as from staff that work in the Recycling Information Center, to understand the gaps and needs they know about that could be resolved by building new facilities or improving existing facilities. Participants identified gaps including the need for more sites that take reusable, repairable and hard-to-recycle items and lack of facilities in the region that take food waste composting, among other things.

The second set of meetings focused on staff that work on-site at Metro's existing garbage and recycling facilities, including Metro South and Central Transfer Stations, MetroPaint and the RID Deployment Center, to leverage their expertise and knowledge about facility gaps. These frontline workers identified gaps including the



large number of items that go to the landfill that could be reused or repaired if there was space at facilities to collect and hold reusable items. Staff also pointed out the challenges of having to separate commercial haulers from self-haul customers at existing facilities, the need for amenities at facilities to improve worker safety, well-being and productivity, and the need for more household hazardous waste facilities spread across the region.

### **Summary Flyers**

Summary flyers provided in Appendix A were created to describe in more detail what we heard from each of these stakeholder groups. The flyers incorporate both input and comments related to facility and infrastructure needs, as well as some of the more general comments shared by stakeholders about challenges of the existing garbage and recycling system.

## **PREVIOUS STUDIES**

Metro has conducted a variety of studies that have evaluated different portions of the garbage and recycling system over the years. The following conclusions related to facility gaps have come from this previous work:

- Self-haul capacity, primarily for construction debris, recyclables and reusables, has been a defined gap for over a decade
- Self-haul customers at existing stations are creating traffic congestion and some unsafe conditions
- Critical facility repairs and upgrades needed for employee and customer safety, hazard resilience, and improved operational efficiency were identified for Metro South and Metro Central in various reports for over a decade
- There is limited capacity of facilities that receive commercial organics
- There is limited access to household hazardous waste across region

Additionally, more recent input received in 2019 during the South and West facility siting projects included concerns about:

- Costs and how to pay for new or improved facilities
- Dumping of garbage and large items on streets and public spaces

Stakeholders involved with those two projects also noted the need for:

- More self-haul, household hazardous waste disposal opportunities, and places to take recyclables and large household items
- More education about recycling and reuse opportunities, including in different languages
- Better access to facilities by different modes of transportation

- Jobs, training, and opportunities for businesses associated with any new or improved public facilities, like transfer stations

## **WHAT COMES NEXT**

The next steps include completing the technical analysis of gaps in the region's network of reuse, recycling and garbage facilities. The technical analysis is being guided by the gaps identified through the engagement activities summarized in this report.

The technical analysis will establish a baseline of the current reuse, recycling and garbage facilities that serve the region and the services they provide. It will then assess the infrastructure investments needed to provide equitable, accessible, affordable and convenient services to increase the reuse, recycling and composting of materials with the goal of reducing the amount of garbage produced by households and businesses in the region.

Following the completion of the technical analysis, Metro will develop and analyze up to three scenarios to address the identified gaps. In Phase 3, Metro will host additional engagements with prioritized stakeholders to gather input and feedback on the scenarios and priorities for investments to build new facilities or to improve existing facilities in the region. Project staff will continue to involve stakeholders and interested parties over the next year by sharing what we did and heard in previous phases of the project and clarifying how this input will be used to create the scenarios that will be developed, assessed and decided upon to be included in the final plan.

## **APPENDICES**

### **A. Phase 2 Engagement Roundtable and Meeting Summary Flyers**



## Reuse & Repair Roundtable Summary

### Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan

*Metro hosted a roundtable on Oct. 4, 2022 to seek input and engagement from partners in reuse and repair. The focus of this meeting was to identify infrastructure or facilities needed to support reuse and repair in the greater Portland region.*

#### Participants were broken up into five small groups to discuss:

- *What infrastructure is needed to support reuse and repair in the greater Portland region, especially in underserved geographic areas of the region?*
- *How can Metro support the reuse and repair economy at Metro transfer stations?*
- *How can equitable distribution systems be created to benefit overburdened communities and other Reuse/Repair systems?*

#### Infrastructure gaps we heard:

- Physical space for warehousing, sorting and storage of reuse materials
- Centralized locations for people to drop off or shop for reuse materials
- Transportation of large items for people without vehicles (trucks)
- Places or hubs for reuse organizations to share tools and equipment

#### Other needs we heard:

- Communications support for reuse campaigns
- Education for regional residents about where to take reuse materials
- Support capacity-building for reuse organizations (staffing, equipment, volunteer matchmaking)
- Policy support for producer accountability and “right to repair”



#### Priorities

Results from a live voting exercise, in which participants ranked their top priorities today, from a list of gaps identified in previous engagements with City of Portland and other projects:

- Storage space (9 votes)
- Ongoing or operation funding from grants or local government (8 votes)
- Staffing capacity (7 votes)
- Processing space (4 votes)
- Organizational capacity (4 votes)
- Cleaning & repair space (3 votes)
- Living wages and benefits for reuse and repair workers (3 votes)
- Policy supporting reuse & repair (3 votes)

#### Overall comments and takeaways from participants:

- Reiterated the value of a centralized volunteer resource pool; Metro facilitating a platform for volunteer pooling would be helpful.
- The low wages at non-profits and lack of benefits mean you can't keep staff on for long; need benefits and a livable wage.
- Some organizations pay volunteers and suggested Metro could offer financial incentives for reuse/repair volunteers.
- This has been a great opportunity for folks to come together, but there should be a longer discussion opportunity, too, with more time to hear from each other.

## Summary discussion notes on gaps:

### Group 1

- Centralized space for refurbishing with tools and storage space
- Distributed donation centers around the city
- Places at transfer station where materials for reuse can be dropped off at no cost (prior to scales)
- Education so reuse organizations don't get junk dumped on them
- Don't want Metro to compete with community organizations, but would like support of existing reuse/repair organizations
- Desire for Metro to follow-up on what they hear from community members with actionable outcomes

### Group 2

- A network of existing organizations to be able to share resources, like volunteers, trucks, bedbug dryer etc.
- Centralized hubs around the area for sharing physical resources and a location for all organizations to work together
- Location is a big barrier and needs to be convenient for many throughout the region
- Physical locations that include customer interface often means staff must deal with mental health crises that they aren't trained for

### Group 3

- Agreement on the hub/spoke model, a centralized processing system for multiple organizations
- Economic incentives from Metro like making transfer station fees cheaper if waste is diverted to a reuse organization first, perhaps through a voucher
- Library is a good model for reuse
- Lowering barriers for grants

- Importance of shoppers having dignity, the experience of shopping in a place that is set up to reduce barriers
- Transportation of large household items to people's homes is needed

### Group 4

- In need of more physical space to receive, process, and store materials
- Agreement with sharing space and pooling resources, especially for those organizations working directly with the public, and with access to trucks
- Importance of increasing public education on where to take materials before and at the transfer station
- Agreement on reducing financial barriers

- More conveniently located facilities for all

### Group 5

- Need more space to process materials
- The large amount of clothing thrown away by each American; need to create a system to sort out what is still useable
- Support transporting large items to people's homes is needed
- Liked the large "mall" concept to bring together multiple organizations
- Interest in the subscription-based home pickup model to remove transportation barriers for customers
- Could there be an opportunity to capture the gas produced at transfer stations to use for mattress debugging?
- Organizations are having to pay retail price at the transfer station when they are taking on the burden of disposing waste on the donor's behalf

## Opportunities for collaboration

Participants also broke into small groups to discuss:

- *What are the opportunities for collaboration? (What should be the role of other players in providing reuse and repair facilities/infrastructure?)*
- *What infrastructure is needed to support these organizations if there are additional collection opportunities?*

## What we heard

Many reuse/repair organizations are small so Metro acting as the convener would be most beneficial to long-term collaboration.

When large businesses have an excess of materials but don't know there is a reuse market it ends up in a landfill. A campaign to market, promote and normalize reuse & repair is needed.

Goodwill has experience to share managing a truck fleet.

Most materials are not made to last long. To support a reuse market, what economic levers could be adjusted to support reuse, such as right to repair and extended producer responsibility legislation?

More sharing of resources and volunteers to make things easier on consumers would be helpful, such as being able to drop off materials at other organizations and having a shared transportation system to get materials to the right organizations.

Desire for financial support from the government to build capacity among organizations that are already doing the work vs. creating new systems.



# Community Partner Roundtable Summary

## Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan

*Metro hosted a roundtable on Oct. 6, 2022 to seek participation from community members and partners representing historically marginalized experiences. The focus of this meeting was to hear about garbage, recycling, reuse and repair service gaps that could be filled by new or updated facilities. The following is a summary of what Metro heard during breakout groups.*

### Round 1 discussion

Discussion was based on these questions:

- What do you do with your garbage, recyclables, and other things you don't need anymore?
- What services are you signed up for and/or regularly use?
- What are the items or materials that are hard to get rid of?

### What we heard:

#### Clackamas County

- Some don't use curbside service, only use Metro South Transfer Station
- Apartment building garbage enclosures are used, but lack recycling opportunities.
- Using community exchange free tables are popular for reusable items
- Batteries, sharps, yard waste, and hazardous waste are all difficult to get rid of

#### Multnomah County

- Group members use creative methods to repurpose or refurbish waste when possible
- Trying to not cook too much to prevent food waste, making broth with vegetable and meat scraps, home composting food waste for gardening

- Giving things away, putting things on curb, using Buy Nothing groups, Habitat for Humanity Restore for reusable items
- Community recycling events, Styrofoam depot on Rosa Parks/Vancouver are good supplemental recycling options
- Use transfer stations for large loads of waste
- Clothing, clamshells, paint, cooking oil are difficult to get rid of
- Ridwell is used for lightbulb recycling



#### Washington County, Group 1

- Collection events are a popular way to get rid of items for disposal. Better advertising, more frequency and language access is desired.
- Recycling worn-out clothes is a challenge, where can fabric be recycled?
- Tip: *Recycle Day* app shows events and facilities near you

#### Washington County, Group 2

- Use curbside pickup, collection events, dump/Transfer Station/landfills
- Disparity of prices for private vs Metro Transfer Stations, means many in Forest Grove/Cornelius must travel farther to Portland
- Differences in services between Apartment buildings and single family houses
- One participant collects food waste in their apartment and brings it to a friend's garden for composting
- Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity Restore, electronic waste collection are good supplemental options



## Round 2 discussion

Discussion was based on these questions:

- *What is working well about these systems?*
- *What is not working well?*
- *What services do you think are missing or wish you had access to in your community?*
- *What are the main barriers that limit you from taking garbage and recycling to a facility today? (cost, distance, accessibility, etc.)*

## What we heard

### Clackamas County

- Language, age and income barriers
- Transfer Stations are not working well because of staff turnover and long lines
- In person events with visual examples are very helpful, beneficial to see the piles of items

### Multnomah County

- Composting is working well except where it's not available for multifamily units and areas that don't offer food waste collection
- Need more education to know what is recyclable, it's complicated because of misleading labels
- Need more education for folks new to area etc.
- Love events, advertising is lacking



### Washington County, Group 1

- Satisfaction with home pickup service that include garbage, recycling and compost, plus using bottle drop
- Dissatisfied with affordability and price disparity between private and Metro Transfer Stations
- Transportation is a big barrier
- Styrofoam is a difficult item to store and to recycle
- Difficulty to access non-English language info to know how to dispose of items and knowing what's hazardous
- Events that accept refrigerators for fridges etc., some of events require to dispose of coolant liquid but that's not common knowledge
- Information access barriers for older folks and younger folks.
- Community organizations are helpful to reach community and host collection events



### Washington County, Group 2

- Shared garbage and recycling spaces in apartment buildings are nice for the community aspect, but there could be many more bins to collect additional items for reuse of special recycling
- Difficult to know what to do with medication
- Centro Cultural events that collect reuse and recycling as well as give vaccines and other offering, convenient to have a 'one stop shop'
- Need more services for houseless camps
- Need a shared community calendar to know where/when events are happening



# Local Government Roundtable Summary

## Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan

*Metro hosted a roundtable on October 31, 2022 to seek input from local government partners. The focus of this meeting was to identify infrastructure or facilities needed to support garbage, recycling, reuse, repair, recycling, and composting services in the greater Portland region. The following is a high-level summary of the discussion.*



### Location of current facilities

- People who live in Washington County and east Multnomah County must travel far to access a public transfer station, or any transfer station in some cases. The private transfer stations in Washington County are more costly for the public to use.
- People who live in Washington County and parts of Clackamas County have less or no convenient access to household hazardous waste, and reuse/repair services.
- Even if a transfer station or collection facility was built in Cornelius (on site purchased by Metro), cities in the southern parts of Washington County (King City, Tigard, Sherwood) would still face access disparities.
- Illegal dumping of garbage is an issue for communities throughout the region, and illegal dumping of household hazardous waste is especially concerning. More garbage facilities with more equitable access could help reduce these issues.

### Who can access current facilities

- There are serious gaps around equity, including barriers for black, indigenous, and people of color, people living with low incomes and non-English speakers in accessing self-haul and special collection services. Seniors, people with limited mobility, and those living unhoused face barriers to accessing self-haul opportunities.

- Variance of fees and service levels between public and private transfer stations is of great concern. Higher costs or lack of services creates access barriers for disposal of household hazardous waste, recycling and bulky waste.
- Multifamily residents lack easy access to food waste and bulky item collection.

### Strengthening our partnerships, regionwide

- Coordination is needed around holiday closures at collection facilities when franchised haulers continue operating and waste gets backed-up.
- More community clean-up events are needed for household hazardous waste and hard-to-dispose-of items. Some local governments have had success with an annual community-wide cleanup day.
- Industrial land availability is limited throughout the Metro region, and this could pose a challenge to building new garbage and recycling facilities.

### Other gaps

- Disasters and emergencies like fires and storms create additional waste and hinder collection. This creates additional costs and accumulation, which especially burdens people with low incomes.
- More education is needed about accessing the waste and recycling system, especially for increasing awareness of available services and events, and for people speaking different languages.

### Small Group Discussions

Participants were broken into eight small groups to discuss:

- How well do community-identified gaps align with your understanding about what is needed in your jurisdiction to better manage reuse, repair, recycling, composting and garbage? What additional facility or service gaps do you see?
- How do the gaps impact your community? Who benefits from current facilities, who is left out or burdened? Are there nuances or unique needs (based on geography, demographics, land use, etc.) specific to your jurisdiction? How might these efforts align with your agency's values and priorities?

#### Washington County

- Primary issue is access; physically and economically. Seniors with mobility issues, multifamily residents, and people with low incomes have the highest needs. Another barrier is language.
- Equity is a big issue. Need to communicate with all communities and not burden marginalized communities as changes are made.
- Should work with all levels of government to move forward more quickly.
- Any look at rate increases needs to be transparent to share with community members.
- Western area: need access to an affordable nearby facility due to higher fees at private transfer stations.
- Southern area: No easy access to a facility, for some the closest is in Newberg.
- Are there alternative ways of providing service (e.g. full scale facility vs. accessible collection

events or a network of smaller facilities)?

- Concern for lack of household hazardous waste collection and environmental impacts of improper disposal.
- Household hazardous waste events happen in the area, but they aren't advertised broadly because they are in high-demand already (too popular). This means some cities never hear about these events, like Durham.
- Ridwell and Pride have started filling some of the recycling service gaps.
- Reuse/repair infrastructure is not as developed on the Westside as it is in Portland, which has organizations like the Rebuilding Center. A hub and spoke model for reuse/repair would be beneficial on the west side.

#### Multnomah County

- Gresham and other East County cities have similar access needs as Washington County.
- There's a need for more communication about holiday facility closures and hours. Some private facilities close on holidays when haulers still operate.
- There's a yard debris/food waste gap for people who live in multifamily housing.
- Need more household hazardous waste events.
- Need disaster planning and coordination among collection facilities during a natural disaster event.
- The garbage doesn't stop for heat, fire or ice emergencies; the people most burdened have low incomes, are not able bodied, or lack transportation.
- Limited access to reuse/repair options.

- Equity concerns for Black, Indigenous, people of color and woman owned companies that collect bulky waste; can needs be aligned to not burden small companies?
- Are depots needed for recycling or should there be expansion of collection services?

#### Clackamas County

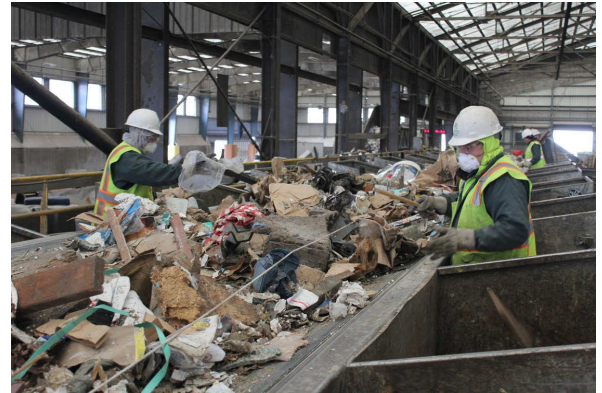
- Existing system, works well for people that have time and money. Low-income and multi-family residents that need self-haul, special collection services, or want to access reuse are not served well.
- Gaps include: reuse/repair options, consistent route efficiency, sustainable funding for reuse, equitable rate setting to pay for services and extended producer responsibility models that include cost of collection.
- Multifamily residents have some of the biggest gaps in service; storage and access for garbage is not adequate at most multi-family residences.
- Ridwell is currently filling some system gaps. Could private companies open depots around the region?
- Concern about rates and the amount of profit that franchise companies are guaranteed.
- There is inconsistent residential food scrap collection service.
- Need to align the system to better support material recovery and reduce waste.
- Clean-up, collection and bulky waste days are popular and should continue; add household hazardous waste to events.
- Other needs include: more Paint-care locations; disaster planning for garbage service; removal of abandoned RVs; ways to get rid of Styrofoam; more support for illegal dumping.



# Private Industry Roundtable Summary

## Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan

*Metro hosted a roundtable on November 3, 2022 to seek input from local garbage and recycling businesses. The focus of this meeting was to identify infrastructure or facilities needed to support garbage, recycling, reuse, repair, recycling, and composting services in the greater Portland region. The following is a high-level summary of what we heard.*



### Existing facility gaps

At the roundtable, we heard about existing gaps including:

- There is only one facility in the region that accepts asbestos, and its location in Hillsboro can be a barrier.
- Space and separation from commercial traffic are barriers for some operators in allowing public self-haul.
- A request for a metal drop-off center that could pay for recyclable metal.
- Specialty haulers need more storage space for hard-to-recycle items, as well as coordination on collection of these items to achieve a cost-effective volume and to weather changes in prices for materials.
- Specialty haulers have difficulty finding someone who will accept recyclables like plastic film and pill bottles.
- More centralization of collection sites would benefit specialty haulers so different types of items/materials can be received at a single location.
- It's difficult to find donation centers that will consistently accept large reuse items like couches and mattresses.
- Gaps related to amenities at Metro transfer stations:
  - Request to retain the truck wash at Metro South.
  - Suggestion for expanding reuse options, like adding a reuse room at transfer stations.
  - Specialty haulers would benefit from asbestos testing opportunities at transfer stations.

### Other system gaps

#### Education needed

- Specialty haulers would benefit from knowing where various items are accepted.
- Metro has an important role in providing public education that helps facility operators reduce contamination and hazards - such as from batteries.
- More public education is needed about where customers can take items for reuse.

#### Policy and regulatory barriers, concerns

- The DEQ classification of a specialty hauler as a transfer station imposes unreasonable requirements.
- Collaboration between Metro and DEQ on sharing required reporting would help lessen the burden on facility operators.
- Private transfer station operators would like to capture more of the waste stream currently processed at Metro-owned facilities and feel they could operate more efficiently than the public sector.
- Transfer station operators need to know the future regulatory environment and markets to make significant investments in their facilities.
- Materials Recovery Facility operators face economic pressures from low or uncertain commodity prices, caps on wet waste, as well as disposal costs for garbage.
- Depots for collecting hard-to-recycle items are not likely to cover the cost to operate.



- Transfer station operators and Materials Recovery Facilities would benefit from increased volume from haulers for different types of materials.
- For wet waste, smaller transfer station operators lack the volume to effectively match Metro's rates.
- If allowed, waste streams from many types of commercial customers with a very small amount of food waste could be processed as dry waste to increase recovery rates.
- There's a role for Metro in helping to provide and/or fund new infrastructure that will be required through the Recycling Modernization Act.

#### Markets

- Research and development are needed in the industry to create recycling markets and scalability.
- While a new west-side transfer station is needed, operators are concerned about how it will be funded and if a new facility would pull wet waste tonnage from other facilities.
- Unpredictable markets for plastics creates barriers.

#### Transfer stations

- Some operators do not want public customers to access their facilities because of space, access, and issues with mis-sorting (also applies to Materials Recovery Facilities).
- Some transfer station operators have space to expand while others do not.
- Acquiring insurance is a barrier for facility operators and something that Metro could help with.
- Haulers face a burden in documenting negative asbestos tests and the risk of a load being rejected; would benefit from acceptance of electronic asbestos test results.

#### Reuse/repair/recycling

- It is not always clear what reuse items will be accepted by donation centers, as this can change daily.
- Acceptance of hard-to-recycle items.
- Given sufficient volume and markets, private haulers can take additional materials that are not currently collected.
- There are not currently good disposal options for used RVs.

- Polypropylene items are expensive to process, which is a barrier to recycling.
- Haulers face a burden when loads are rejected because of contamination (like lumber in yard debris).

#### Residential self-haul

- Public self-haul access is costly for private facility operators because people dump garbage or materials that are not accepted; would need more staff to operate effectively.
- Partnership from the public sector and/or volunteers (like master recyclers) in staffing depots could help offset rising costs to private industry in making depots available to the public.



# Community Advisory Group Summary

## Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan

*Metro convened a Community Advisory Group to advise on key decision-points throughout the development of the Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan. The committee met in October and December 2022 to identify, review, and discuss the garbage, recycling, reuse and repair service gaps that could be filled by new or updated facilities. The following is a high-level summary of what we heard.*

### Existing facility gaps

Committee members shared the following summarized comments about existing facilities:

- Reuse organizations and future drop off facilities should have longer and/or weekend hours. Some are hard to access depending on work schedules.
- Transportation from residences to facilities is needed for large, reusable items.
- Physical assistance is important to have at facilities for those who cannot lift items.
- Need more education and information in multiple languages on where facilities are located to recycle or donate items, especially for people new to the area.
- Household hazardous waste disposal is needed, even in areas that have a transfer station to collect it. This could be an issue with lack of transportation, improper education, or an inconvenience because of the long lines at existing facilities.
- Need to prioritize reuse and repair at facilities to combat culture of excess buying and consumerism.
- Need better education on where to take items that can be reused.
- Need better options for repair services in Washington County.
- Marginalized people needing employment could be trained and taught repair and refurbishing skills to be able to work at reuse/repair organizations.
- HHW and reuse collection events are often located too far away from where people are able to access them.
- There should be more recycling options at workplaces for items like batteries, Styrofoam
- If more space is needed for reuse/repair storage, could local governments provide use or access to unoccupied or underutilized buildings?
- Illegal dumping seems to be an issue across the entire Metro region. Can Metro collaborate with local governments to address this problem?

### Other system gaps

- Recycling at apartment buildings is challenging due to:
  - Lack of compost collection.
  - Bin capacity and improper sorting.
  - Glass collection is not standard in some areas.
  - Lack of direction or responsibility for recycling options from landlords/building owners.



*Hear from Bunsereyithy (Bun) Kong, Washington County resident, about why he joined the Community Advisory Group, "I can bring the knowledge that I learn from the advisory committee to share with my community members."*

**The advisory group will provide input and their expertise throughout all phases of the project. Learn more:**

[oregonmetro.gov/  
systemfacilitiesplan](https://oregonmetro.gov/systemfacilitiesplan)



# Waste Prevention and Environmental Services Staff Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan

*In November 2022, staff from Metro's Waste Prevention and Environmental Services Department provided input on the garbage, recycling, reuse and repair service gaps that could be filled by new or updated facilities. The intent was to seek input and expertise from all levels of staff currently involved with planning, operating, and delivering garbage and recycling services. Feedback was provided from policy and program staff, as well as staff at existing facilities: Metro South and Central Transfer Stations, Metro Paint, and the RID Deployment Center. The following is a high-level summary of what we heard.*

## Existing facility gaps

Staff shared the following summarized comments about the existing system:

- There is a need for more transfer stations, spread equally throughout the region.
- There is a lack of space at existing garbage and recycling facilities to separate and store unwanted items that could be reused.
- Many people don't donate items at a separate facility for reuse because they don't know where to take them or don't want to make multiple trips.
- Composting facilities, especially food waste composting, are needed to meet state waste reduction & carbon goals.
- Facilities need to better accommodate residential self-haul customers. There is currently limited capacity for residents, who make up the majority of customers.
- More sites need to offer asbestos testing to allow for easier reuse of building materials and prevent contamination. Currently only Waste Management in Hillsboro can dispose of asbestos.
- Facility maintenance and disaster resilience is needed at Metro facilities.



## Other system gaps

- Recycling should be incentivized through credits at facilities.
- Need better employment pathways for advancement of Metro facility staff.
- Need more recyclers to accept hard-to-recycle items like clothing, plastics, sharps and plastic film.
- There is a lack of medication drop-off sites on the west side of the region.
- There is a lack of animal rendering services; businesses that process meat do not have many options for waste besides the landfill.
- It would be nice to have more sites that can convert food waste into energy.
- Transportation to and from facilities is inequitable because a vehicle is needed.
- Seniors and disabled residents need assistance moving and disposing of large household appliances and furniture.
- Large quantities of food waste are taken to the landfill because there are not enough recyclers to de-package food waste for composting.
- More public education is needed about what is recyclable.
- More collection events are needed.

Staff at each facility voted on a list of identified gaps and needs. Their priorities are summarized below.

Gaps & Needs	Metro South	Metro Central	Metro Paint	RID	Total
More facilities for the general public to take recyclables and donate reusable items	9	13	3	1	26
Dedicated drop off areas before entering scalehouses to recover materials for reuse and recycling	8	8	6	1	23
More and better access to parking, lockers, restrooms, etc. for Metro facility workers	11	3	6		20
Space for reuse organizations to sort, repair/refurbish and store items collected	10	7	1	1	19
More and affordable self-haul facilities for garbage, construction waste and large household items	9	8	1		18
More facilities that accept household hazardous waste	9	8	1		18
Improvements at existing facilities to reduce energy use, emissions and other pollution	8	6	1		15
Facilities that are accessible to people who don't drive cars	3	7	3		13
Safety improvements at existing facilities	4		2		6
More capacity to process food waste from businesses and households	3		1		4
More lending libraries to encourage people to buy less			3		3

Staff identified gaps specific to Metro (WPES) facilities, including the following highlights:

#### Metro South Transfer Station

- Facility is overcrowded and residents travel long distances use services.
- Residential self-haul and commercial customers should be separated for safety and convenience.
- Items that could be reused cannot be recovered once they pass the scales.
- Reusable materials are being thrown away due to lack of space for recovery.
- Need public restrooms.

#### Metro Central Transfer Station

- Site layout is not optimal.
- Need a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) loading dock for easier unloading.
- Need covered outside areas.
- Need employee amenities like space to eat lunch.

#### MetroPaint

- Facility building is leased rather than owned, which is not ideal.
- Need to modernize facility and equipment for efficiency and staff safety.
- Facility needs more employee amenities like locker rooms, space for meetings and lunch.
- Need a viewing room for community education.
- Could use a grey water system to recycle the large amount of water needed for facility washing.
- Facility could be co-located with other programs like RID and graffiti abatement.

#### RID

- Current RID vehicles do not have space to separate wet waste from reusable items for transfer or distribution to facilities/organizations.

- RID staff see lots of opportunities to recover reusable items across the region to bring to transfer stations or organizations that could sell or distribute them to people in need.

*Facility staff identified other gaps and needs related to day-to-day facility maintenance, operations, worker safety and programming. The gaps not directly related to the System Facilities Plan will be addressed in other projects.*

