

WASTE PREVENTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: REGIONAL WASTE PLAN OUTCOMES AND COUNCIL PRIORITIES DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

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Department: Waste Prevention and
Environmental Services

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Length: 40 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

During the creation of the FY23-24 budget, Council directed the Waste Prevention and Environmental Services department to provide ongoing education about fees and regional waste priorities to inform future Council direction on the annual WPES budget and regional waste fees. In response, the department 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 will also provide additional context to support Council decisions on the Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan that will provide direction on future infrastructure investments.

At the September 12th work session, staff reviewed the outcomes and goals for the regional waste system. This work session will continue the discussion, provide additional information on the regional waste system and seek direction on Council priorities to guide policy development and inform FY24 budget.

Beyond September, staff seeks to increase ongoing communications with Council about budget and fee considerations for the FY24-25 budget cycle. Both the September work sessions and future Council engagements will reinforce the connections between regional waste goals, existing policies and programs, and future priorities for investment. These engagements will include data and other information Councilors specifically requested during past budget cycles.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff requests Council direction on priorities to guide policy development work for council consideration and areas of investment to inform FY24 budget development.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Regional Outcomes

This Council and previous Councils have reiterated their support for an equitable and accessible garbage and recycling system that protects the environment through a series of policies. Current Council priorities are reflected in existing policy guidance, presenting strong opportunities to more aggressively advance goals. Those priorities include:

- Reduce garbage through waste reduction and recycling
- Improve service quality and access
- Keep services affordable

- Minimize impacts on people and the environment
- Improve economic opportunities and provide good jobs in the garbage and recycling industry

2030 Regional Waste Plan

The 2030 Regional Waste Plan, adopted in 2019, includes the region's statutorily required waste reduction plan. The plan is the region's blueprint for improving our garbage and recycling system, reducing the impacts of waste, and advancing Metro's racial equity goals that are implemented collaboratively with local governments and partners in local communities.

The plan is comprised of goals and actions to achieve three sets of desired outcomes: shared prosperity, a healthy environment, and an excellent and accessible garbage and recycling system outlined below.

Figure 1. Regional Waste Plan Outcomes



In the September 12th and 14th work sessions, staff will share progress to date towards these outcomes and introduce program and policy priorities for council consideration.

POLICY QUESTIONS




- Does the policy guidance and goals in the Regional Waste Plan reflect your priorities for the region's waste system?
- Are there additional areas of investment for the FY24 budget that Council would like brought forward for discussion?
- What technical information is needed in the upcoming budget cycle to make informed decisions about facilities, fees, or the budget for the remainder of the fiscal year?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Staff requests Council direction on priorities to guide policy development work for Council consideration and areas of investment to inform FY24 budget development. This includes key policy and planning efforts underway, priorities for Council policy direction and areas of investment for the FY24 budget.

Key policy and planning efforts underway include both state and regional-level initiatives. In addition, there are existing programs that require policy direction by Metro Council. Lastly, there are proposed investment areas that staff seek additional direction from Council to guide levels of investment for FY24 budget development. These priorities are listed below along with the associated regional outcome.

Proposed Policy Priorities and Investment Areas

Key Policy and Planning Efforts Underway	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oregon Recycling Modernization Act• Garbage and Recycling System Facilities Plan• Waste System and Fee Task Force• Bulky Waste Policy Project	
Priorities for Council Policy Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rate Transparency• Wet Waste Tonnage Allocation Program Evaluation• Community Enhancement Grant Program• Dry Waste Recovery Program Update	
Proposed FY24 Investment Areas for Council Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Innovation and Investment Grant Assessment• RID Work Force Transition Program• Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events• Business Food Scraps Requirement Implementation and Infrastructure Investments	

Related regional outcomes:

 Shared Prosperity  Healthy Environment  Excellent and Accessible Garbage and Recycling System

STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND COUNCIL FRAMING DISCUSSION

Key Policies and Planning Efforts Underway

There are two key initiatives for advancing progress toward regional outcomes, the state Recycling Modernization Act and the Garbage and Recycling Systems Facilities Plan.

Oregon Recycling Modernization Act

The new statewide law will update Oregon's outdated system and restore public trust by ensuring that materials are recycled and create environmental benefits. This system-wide update will make recycling easier for the public to use, expand access to recycling services, upgrade the facilities that sort recyclables, and create environmental benefits while reducing social and environmental harms, such as plastic pollution. It will do this by increasing access to recycling and in 2025, there will be one statewide list of what can be recycled. Producers and manufacturers of packaged items, paper products and food service ware will pay for many of these necessary improvements and help ensure recycling is successful in Oregon. The new law became effective Jan. 1, 2022, and recycling

program changes will start in July 2025. Metro and local governments are engaged in the state's rule-making process for the law and coordinating around implementation for greater Portland.

Systems Facilities Plan

The Garbage and Recycling Systems Facilities Plan is designed to provide options for Council to decide on the future infrastructure investments needed in our region to modernize our reuse, recycling, and garbage system. Four draft scenarios for Council consideration are designed to address existing service gaps and help ensure we continue to meet waste reduction goals and ensure equitable and affordable services for everyone.

While the Regional Waste Plan provides the policy guidance, the System Facilities Plan currently under development will provide a long-range infrastructure plan and pinpoint key investments needed to fulfill the Regional Waste Plan goals including improving access to reuse, recycling and garbage services. The plan will also guide Metro's participation in Recycling Modernization Act implementation.

Key Projects Related to Budget and Fee Setting

Waste System and Fee Reforms Budget Note

Council directed the Chief Operating Officer to work with WPES to clarify regional waste outcomes to guide reforms of waste system and solid waste fees for the FY24-25 annual budget. To support this direction, staff will work with the Council President to announce the formation of a special task force to convene in 2023 and the first months of 2024 to evaluate the structure of fees and provide recommendations to Council to inform FY24-25 fee setting.

Rate Transparency

Beginning in 2010, local governments began expressing concern as rates at private facilities began to exceed rates at public stations. During the last fee-setting process, cities and counties also elevated the need to ensure that rates charged at private stations are reasonable, regionally consistent, and well-understood. Metro does not currently regulate rates at privately owned facilities but could exercise the authority to do so if Metro Council finds it to be in the public interest. Prior to any decision by Council to consider regulation, staff recommend that a rate assessment is conducted to better understand what actual cost drivers are impacting actual private transfer stations in our region. Staff are developing a proposal for Council consideration to respond to local government concerns that follow up on the implementation of the Transfer System Configuration Policy adopted by Metro Council in 2016, which was aimed at ensuring rate transparency.

BACKGROUND

Metro has broad authority for planning, managing, and overseeing the regional waste system. The Regional Waste Plan provides policy guidance and outlines responsibilities for cities, counties and Metro to collaboratively manage the system.

Regional Authority

In 1987, the Metro Council designated solid waste as an area and activity appropriate for a functional plan. With this action, it recognized the complexity of managing a regional waste system that serves two dozen cities, portions of three counties, over a million residents, thousands of businesses and many solid waste service providers. A regional plan provides a unified blueprint to coordinate all parties and to bring the parts of the system together into a well-functioning whole.

Additionally, under Oregon state law, any jurisdiction sending more than 75,000 tons of solid waste per year to a permitted disposal site is required to prepare a waste reduction program for review and approval by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. The statutorily required waste reduction program for the Metro region consists of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan actions and the requirements for local governments outlined in Metro Code Chapter 5.15 and the corresponding administrative rules.

The Waste Prevention and Environmental Services department is responsible for ensuring that all solid waste generated in the region is managed in a manner that protects public health and safeguards the environment. As a part of this responsibility, the department administers the Regional Waste Plan that helps fulfill state planning requirements.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 2030 Regional Waste Plan Executive Summary

Attachment 2: Regional Waste Plan Progress Report