

STAFF REPORT

COMMUNITY CLEANUP UPDATES TO COUNCIL AND DISCUSSION

Date: September 16th, 2021
Department: WPES
Meeting Date: October 5th, 2021

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Presenter(s) (if applicable):
Roy Brower, Department Director
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Length: 30 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Metro Council approved an April 2021 budget amendment and fiscal year 2021-22 budget modification totaling \$3.5 million directing the Waste Prevention and Environmental Services department to increase services to address community cleanup needs and impacts across the region resulting from dumped garbage, graffiti and litter. WPES staff will report to Council on the department's progress to date.

ACTION REQUESTED

This is an informational item to update Metro Council on the department's progress to-date in restoring and expanding cleanup services.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Investments in community cleanup services and resources advances Metro's Regional Waste Plan goals and actions through the restoration and expansion of service levels by ensuring that high-quality and good-value programs, services and facilities are equitably accessible to all. Successful cleanup efforts will help Metro keep our promise of keeping the region clean and livable. The budget modifications primarily address restoration of RID Patrol service levels and collection of priority solid waste materials which advance the following Regional Waste Plan goals and actions outlined below. These investments in restoration and expansion of community cleanup services prioritize underserved communities experiencing the greatest barriers to accessing cleanup services and/or disproportionately impacted by impacts due to illegal dumping, graffiti and litter.

Goal 10 Provide regionally consistent services for garbage, recyclables and other priority materials that meet the needs of all users.

10.4 Provide convenient, accessible and equitable collection of hazardous waste from households and Conditionally Exempt Generators, prioritizing communities with greatest need.

- 10.7 *Partner with community health organizations to expand options for collection of hypodermic needles and other types of medical waste, prioritizing individuals with the greatest barriers to service.*

Goal 11 Address and resolve community concerns and service issues.

- 11.4 *Provide services to clean up illegal dumps on public property, prioritizing communities with the greatest need.*
- 11.5 *Research the root causes that contribute to illegal dumping and how they can be addressed.*
- 11.6 *Implement garbage and recycling collection services for people experiencing homelessness.*

Additionally, investments in the RID Patrol program provide essential resources needed to advance the department's workforce transition program and advance the following Regional Waste Plan goals and actions:

- Goal 4 Increase the diversity of the workforce in all occupations where people of color, women, and other historically marginalized communities are underrepresented.*
 - 4.1 *Implement a workforce development and readiness program for garbage and recycling industry jobs.*
 - 4.2 *Develop a career pathways strategy that aims to increase the diversity of workers in all solid waste occupations.*
 - 4.5 *In partnership with community-based organizations, create workforce development programs within the reuse sector that focus people with barriers to employment.*

BACKGROUND

The emergence of the pandemic in 2020 and increasing COVID-19 safety and health restrictions, significantly impacted Metro's capacity to provide community cleanup services and resources. This included RID Patrol that saw a significant increase in response times to clean up dumped and abandoned garbage across the region as well as the program's capacity to support the houseless community and local jurisdictions in addressing impacts from people living in public spaces. Services such as community household hazardous waste collection were also paused due to COVID restrictions. Additionally, impacts due to graffiti and litter increased across the region during this time.

In spring of 2021, Metro Council approved two significant budget expansions including an amendment of the FY 21 budget and modification to the FY 22 budget together totaling \$3.5 million. These budget expansions are being directed towards providing the staffing, equipment and other resources needed to return RID Patrol to pre-pandemic service levels while also providing additional resources to address acute impacts from graffiti and litter across the region.

Progress to Date

The following highlights actions supported by the budget expansions and the key milestones reached as of August 2021. Staff will provide an updated and expanded list of key milestones during work session:

- Expand RID Patrol from two to six crews as well as well four additional program staff to support planning and logistical needs including the workforce transition expansion.
 - RID Patrol cleaned up nearly 800 sites in three month period from June to August 2021; removing 122 tons of waste. Response times to cleanup sites improved significantly from 60 days in June to 18 days on average in August.
 - A deployment center for RID Patrol crews has been located and leased in SE Portland. After repairs and improvements, the program expects to begin operating out of this space in late fall 2021.
- Provide financial support for local community groups, small businesses and local governments to defray local cleanup and disposal costs. This accessible, low barrier sponsorship focuses on projects within Equity Focus Areas across the region.
 - A pilot of the program was launched in late spring and has distributed \$57,000 to support cleanup needs with local government and nonprofit organizations.
 - The limited duration Program Coordinator was hired in August and will work to expand this program more broadly throughout the upcoming year
- Increase donation of MetroPaint to local groups to address graffiti issues in public spaces including graffiti impacts to small businesses, as well other needs such as donations to affordable housing projects or to support other community assets.
 - MetroPaint partnered with City of Portland's Civic Life Graffiti Program to launch "Paint it Up, Clean it Up," to provide free cleaning and painting kits to the community. As part of the initial launch, 300 kits will be distributed (750 gallons of recycled paint). MetroPaint will be expanding this effort to include other jurisdictions across the region focusing on underserved communities.
- Through public/private partnerships centering BIPOC businesses and communities of color develop an equivalent of two additional cleanup crews.
 - A request for proposals was conducted with two BIPOC businesses submitting proposals. Proposals are currently under review.

- As part of this effort, Metro has also resumed small scale community collection events with a focus on supporting existing partnerships with community based organizations. The events take place within underserved communities and prioritize materials such as sharps, medications and batteries. In addition, several of these events are being paired with bulky waste collection.
 - Seventeen events have been conducted as of August 2021 partnering with community based organizations such as NxNE Community Health Center, Trash for Peace and Home Forward.

ATTACHMENTS

- Is legislation required for Council action? Yes ☒ No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? Yes No
- What other materials are you presenting today? None