

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Gary Schmidt, County Administrator

FROM: Dan Johnson; DTD Director

RE: Draft Metro Regional System Facilities Plan – Draft Letter of Comment

DATE: October 29, 2024

REQUEST: This is a request for the Board to consider submitting a Letter of Comment on Metro’s DRAFT Regional System Facilities Plan.

BACKGROUND: Metro has developed a draft Regional System Facilities Plan (RSFP) to guide investments in the region’s reuse, recycling and garbage infrastructure. The RSFP assess the current public, private, and non-profit garbage, recycling and reuse infrastructure, identifies gaps in services, and presents potential plans for future investments in new facilities or new services. Additional information and a link to the draft plan are available at [Metro’s regional system facilities plan website](#).

The RSFP presents a 20-year strategy and overviews investments in 4 key areas:

- **Community drop-off depots.** Establishment of six regionally dispersed community drop-off depots to accept noncommercial self-haul garbage, recycling, reuse materials, and household hazardous waste. The proposal includes transitioning Metro South into a community drop-off depot.
- **Reuse and repair.** New reuse and repair options including a warehouse space for reuse organizations, and development of a reuse mall to promote reuse and provide community access to upcycled and refurbished items.
- **Organics infrastructure.** Expanding the transfer and processing of organics (food waste, yard debris, clean wood), including making Metro Central an organics hub, and exploring public-private partnerships to develop additional hubs.
- **Metro South.** With Metro South proposed to transition to a community drop-off depot, the RSFP includes new investments in Clackamas County to provide commercial transfer services. The two proposals provided in the draft are using private transfer stations to accept commercial materials or building a new transfer station through a public-private partnership.

Development of the RSFP began in February 2022, and the draft plan is open for public comment during the month of October. Staff have developed the attached DRAFT Letter of Comment for Board consideration.

While the letter addresses several items, of particular concern is the request for the newly formed Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) to review and provide feedback on the plan prior to adoption. This group will be responsible for guiding the implementation of this plan and fee adjustments. The RSFP proposes large scale changes that will impact the entire region and is estimated to increase household garbage bills by \$1.50 to \$2.00 monthly. Currently Metro Council is scheduled to consider adoption of the RSFP in December 2024 before the RWAC is seated in January 2024.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff respectfully recommends the Board approve the comment letter on the DRAFT Regional System Facilities Plan.

Attachments: DRAFT Letter of Comment for Board consideration

October #, 2024

Metro Council

600 NE Grand Ave.

Portland, OR 97232

RE: Draft Regional System Facilities Plan

President Peterson and Metro Councilors,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft Regional System Facilities Plan (RSFP). This plan will inform and guide the evolution of our solid waste system and will provide the vital resources needed to achieve the goals of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan; therefore, it is critical that the final plan be supported by agency partners and the community.

We acknowledge that this is a complex system and recognize the difficulty of developing a plan that balances the needs of our diverse communities and the many groups that interact with, and depend on, our regional waste facilities.

After 18 months of development, we understand the urgency to adopt the plan in December. However, in order to ensure that the RSFP is supported by agency partners Metro must provide an opportunity for the newly reconfigured Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC) to review and provide feedback on the plan prior to adoption.

Currently the RWAC is not scheduled to begin meeting until after this plan has been adopted. RWAC, which will include elected representatives from partner agencies, will be responsible for guiding implementation of this plan and the associated fee adjustments. The RSFP proposes large scale changes that will impact the entire region and is estimated to increase household garbage bills by \$1.50 to \$2 monthly. **For these reasons we insist that staff wait to seek adoption until this plan has been vetted by the newly reconfigured Regional Waste Advisory Committee.**

The RSFP proposes significant changes for Clackamas County, especially for the Metro South transfer station located in Oregon City. The plan proposes:

- ceasing collection of materials from commercial customers within the next ten years,
- reconfiguring the site for Metro South to become a public only drop off site for small loads of garbage, household hazardous waste materials and provide reuse and recycling opportunities, and
- using private transfer stations to replace the commercial functions of Metro South.

The RSFP states that the risks of privatization could include increased costs for commercial customers and possibly a reduction in the types of materials that would be accepted. These risks would be highly impactful to our community and must be mitigated if this approach is to be taken. To guarantee full and cost-effective services for our residents, it is critical that County franchisees have a publicly rate regulated facility in or near Clackamas County that accepts all materials.

Enacting the plan's vision, and ensuring the final plan and the facilities it produces meets regional needs and economic considerations, will require ongoing collaborative engagement with solid waste professionals, local governments, elected officials and residents from Clackamas County.

We are encouraged by the investment ideas that are included in the RSFP but we have questions and concerns about the region's ability to implement these changes. We ask that you take the time to vet this plan with RWAC prior to adoption so that we can work to make sure that the plan will meet the needs of our communities without adding unnecessary financial burden.

We look forward to working together to provide a cost-effective infrastructure to manage materials and protect our environment for the future.

Sincerely,

DRAFT