

REGIONAL WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE: MEETING #1

Meeting Date/Time: Wednesday, February 26, 2025, 10:00am-12:00pm

Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82883301161?pwd=4l6QnBeiPFiaJ05sNTsTEkKcJLB3ye.1&from=addon>

Attendees

Subcommittee Members

Commissioner Kevin Cameron, Benton County
Tim Dooley, Association of Oregon Counties
Tom Egleston, Oregon Metro
Courtney Flathers, Regional Solutions, Governor's Office
Jessi Just, Heart of CARTM
Jeff Orlandini, Lane County
Amy Roth, Association of Oregon Recyclers
Commissioner Pat Malone, Benton County
Brian May, Marion County
Sean McGuire, Benton County
Bailey Payne, Benton County

Staff

Facilitator: Elizabeth Start, Start Consulting Group
Subject Matter Expert: Bryce Hesterman, RRS
Researcher: Allegra Starr, RRS

Notes

Key Takeaways

- Extensive research was presented on transfer network logistics, export strategies, and partnerships
- Key considerations include cost comparisons, population size/density, and existing infrastructure
- Flow control and ownership models are complex issues requiring further legal/policy analysis
- Next steps: Committee to review full research document, provide feedback, and rank strategy priorities

Topics

Allegra Starr presented detailed research on 9 key strategies, organized by impacts, examples, and considerations. Strategies included eco-parks, new/retrofitted transfer stations, flow control, hub-and-spoke models, intermodal networks, and nonprofit partnerships. The research aimed to inform cost-benefit analysis and prioritization of strategies.

Eco-Park Transfer Station Systems

- Examples: Edmonton eco-stations, Recology facility, KMA Environmental Center
- Key benefits: 40% diversion rates, public education opportunities
- Considerations: High upfront costs, siting challenges, design needs to match regional scale

Retrofitting Existing Infrastructure

- Options: Mini-MRFs, AI/optical sorting, automated balers, reuse integration
- Benefits vary by specific retrofit type - some more cost-effective than others
- Committee suggested adding low-tech manual sorting option as another retrofit strategy

Flow Control and Ownership Models

- Complex legal/policy issues around directing waste flows, especially to private facilities
- Public ownership may provide more flexibility for flow control
- Further analysis needed on legal risks and mechanisms before recommending approach

Hub-and-Spoke Networks

- Examples mostly focused on recycling/MRFs rather than MSW
- Transportation emissions a key tradeoff to consider
- Suggestion to map out potential regional hub-and-spoke model centered on proposed Mid-Willamette Valley site

Intermodal Transfer Networks

- Considerations: Geographic location, infrastructure, waste volumes, costs, environmental impacts
- Most examples from large urban areas - need more rural/regional case studies
- Committee interested in specifics for proposed Mid-Willamette Valley intermodal site

Partnerships with Nonprofits

- Types: Collection/redistribution, specialized waste programs, job training, zero waste initiatives
- Local examples like Trash for Peace and Heart of CARTM suggested for inclusion
- Can be lower-cost strategy leveraging existing programs

Ideas

- Eco-Park Transfer Station System - Discussed examples of eco-park style transfer stations and their potential for waste diversion, economic impacts, and community benefits.
- Developing New Public Multi-Stream Transfer Stations - Looked at design elements, examples, and considerations for new transfer stations focused on recovery.
- Retrofitting Existing Infrastructure - Explored different retrofit options like mini-MRFs, AI/optical sorting, and integrating reuse, along with the benefits and challenges of each.
- Ensuring Solid Waste Haulers Use the Nearest Processing Facility - Discussed using policy tools like franchise agreements, contracts, and regulations to direct waste flow to the closest facility.
- Partnerships with Non-Profits - Reviewed different types of non-profit partnerships for collection, redistribution, job training, and community engagement around waste reduction.
- Hub and Spoke Model - Examined examples of regional hub and spoke waste transfer networks and the tradeoffs around transportation emissions.
- Intermodal Transfer Station Networks - Discussed the design considerations and case studies for intermodal transfer systems utilizing modes like rail, barge, and truck.
- The group also provided feedback on the research, suggesting things like including cost comparisons and focusing on examples more tailored to the regional context.

Considerations

Cost and Financing:

- The group emphasized the need to provide more information on the relative costs and scale of the different strategies (e.g. using a \$ to \$\$\$\$\$ scale).
- There was discussion around how public investment and ownership models can impact the economics and feasibility of certain strategies.

Legal and Regulatory Factors:

- The group highlighted the importance of understanding the legal implications and case law around flow control policies that direct waste to specific facilities.
- There was a recognition that legislative action may be needed to provide local governments the necessary authority for certain strategies.

Regional Context and Scale:

- The participants emphasized the need to focus on examples and case studies that are more tailored to the size and characteristics of the Mid-Willamette Valley region, rather than just large urban areas.
- Considerations around population size, geographic factors, and existing infrastructure were seen as important in evaluating the applicability of different strategies.

Equity and Community Impacts:

- The group wanted to ensure strategies were evaluated for their potential impacts, both positive and negative, on specific populations and disadvantaged communities.
- Siting, access, and the distribution of benefits were highlighted as key equity considerations.

Waste Flows and System Integration:

- The interdependencies between different parts of the waste management system, like collection, transfer, and disposal, were recognized as important factors.
- Strategies that could influence or direct waste flows, like flow control policies, were seen as needing further investigation.

Questions

Cost Comparisons:

- Tom Egleston asked if there was any relative cost information or scale (e.g. \$ to \$\$\$\$) to help compare the different strategies.
- Commissioner Malone also emphasized the need for more specifics on the population size and scale that would make certain strategies most practical.

Legal Considerations around Flow Control:

- Tom Egleston raised concerns about the legal implications of directing private haulers to use specific public or private facilities, and the need to further unpack those issues.
- There was a discussion around whether public ownership or public-private partnerships could impact the legal feasibility of flow control policies.

Applicability of Examples to the Regional Context:

- The group wanted to ensure the examples and case studies provided were more tailored to the size and characteristics of the Mid-Willamette Valley region, rather than just large urban areas.
- Bryce Hesterman questioned whether the hub-and-spoke and intermodal examples were focused more on source-separated recyclables versus mixed municipal solid waste.

Integrating Nonprofit Partnerships:

- Jessi Just and Elizabeth Start provided examples of successful nonprofit partnerships around reuse, donation, and community engagement that could be incorporated.
- The group discussed whether to use the term "zero waste" or find an alternative to describe those types of initiatives.

Considerations for Retrofitting Existing Infrastructure:

- The group explored the tradeoffs between retrofitting existing facilities versus building new ones, and how that might impact the feasibility and design of certain strategies.

Action: Research and Analysis

Provide More Cost and Scale Information:

- The group requested that Allegra and the research team try to incorporate some relative cost comparisons or scale indicators (e.g. \$ to \$\$\$\$) for the different strategies.
- This was seen as helpful for evaluating the feasibility and tradeoffs of the various options.

Investigate Legal Implications of Flow Control:

- The group recognized the need to further unpack the legal considerations and case law around policies that direct waste flows to specific facilities, especially the differences between public and private ownership.
- This was identified as an important area for additional research and analysis.

Focus on Examples Tailored to the Regional Context:

- Participants emphasized the importance of providing examples and case studies that are more representative of the population size, geography, and existing infrastructure of the Mid-Willamette Valley region.
- This could involve finding smaller-scale or more distributed regional models, in addition to the larger urban examples.

Incorporate Additional Nonprofit Partnership Examples:

- The group provided some specific examples of successful nonprofit collaborations around reuse, donation, and community engagement that could be added to the research.
- This included programs like Trash for Peace in the Metro region and the partnerships facilitated by organizations like Heart of CARTM.

Share Additional Feedback and Information:

- The participants were asked to review the research document further and provide any additional comments, questions, or information that could help strengthen the analysis and recommendations.
- This feedback was requested to be sent to Allegra and the research team over the next month before the next meeting.