

REGIONAL WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE: MEETING #4

Meeting Date/Time: Monday, May 5, 2025, 10:00am-12:00pm

Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83643934087?pwd=ya0hKH4SMSKrMiZOuRlstupbNL7LLT.1&from=addon>

Attendees

Subcommittee Members

Commissioner Kevin Cameron, Benton County

Tom Egleston, Oregon Metro

Jessi Just, Heart of CARTM

Commissioner Pat Malone, Benton County

Brian May, Marion County

Sean McGuire, Benton County

Jeff Orlandini, Lane County

Bailey Payne, Benton County

Amy Roth, Association of Oregon Recyclers

Staff

Facilitator: Elizabeth Start, Start Consulting Group

Subject Matter Expert: Bryce Hesterman, RRS

Research: Allegra Starr, RRS

Notes

Key Takeaways

- A regional, publicly-owned approach with potential private operation is favored for new transfer/recovery infrastructure
- Intermodal transport (rail) could provide benefits but needs further analysis on costs/logistics
- Flexibility in facility design is crucial to accommodate future material diversion opportunities
- An organizing authority or cooperative agreement between counties may be needed to coordinate efforts
- Aim for new infrastructure to be operational within 10 years to address Coffin Butte landfill closure

Topics

Transfer Station Design for Recovery

- Focus on flexible, multi-material recovery spaces that can adapt over time
- Prioritize diversion of bulky, regulated, and problematic materials
- Consider "pop-up" model for rotating material collections with nonprofits
- Size facilities to accommodate traffic flow and adequate storage for marketable quantities
- Aim for 20-30 year planning horizon in designs

Regional Network Networks & Governance

- Interest in multi-county cooperative approach (e.g. Benton, Linn, Marion, Polk, Lincoln, Tillamook)
- Need for some form of flow control or tonnage guarantees to ensure viability
- Potential for joint powers authority or regional disposal district to coordinate
- Importance of maintaining local control over collection franchises

Intermodal Transport

- Mid-Valley Intermodal Center presents opportunity to integrate with waste system
- Rail could reduce road impacts, emissions, weather disruptions vs. trucking
- Economics favor rail for longer distances, but exact breakeven point unclear
- Would require investment in container handling equipment at transfer stations

Ownership & Operation Models

- Strong preference for public ownership of facilities
- Private operation under contract could leverage expertise while maintaining public control
- Case-by-case approach may be needed based on local capabilities/economics
- Importance of clear contract requirements to ensure diversion goals are met

Ideas

- Prioritizing recovery of materials like large furniture, mattresses, and regulated items like TVs at transfer stations
- Designing transfer stations to be flexible and accommodate changing recovery needs over time
- Pursuing a regional, multi-county approach to transfer station infrastructure and operations
- Utilizing the Mid-Valley Intermodal Center as a potential hub for a regional transfer network
- Exploring intermodal transportation options like rail to reduce long-haul truck trips
- Considering a public ownership model, potentially through an intergovernmental agreement or regional authority
- Ensuring contractual requirements and flow control mechanisms to guarantee inbound tonnage and support financing
- Partnering with nonprofits to facilitate reuse and diversion at transfer stations
- Setting a goal of having new/retrofitted transfer infrastructure operational within 10 years

Considerations

- Sizing and designing transfer stations to have enough space and flexibility to accommodate various recovery and diversion activities, not just waste transfer
- Balancing the need for public ownership/control with the operational expertise of private contractors.
- Ensuring there are mechanisms like flow control or intergovernmental agreements to guarantee inbound tonnage and support financing
- Addressing potential industry opposition and concerns about rate impacts
- Considering the tradeoffs between truck transport vs. intermodal rail/barge in terms of cost, emissions, weather resilience, and road impacts
- Determining the appropriate geographic scale - whether individual counties, a regional cooperative, or a larger multi-county authority
- Identifying which existing transfer stations could be retrofitted quickly versus the need for new, larger facilities
- Establishing clear service requirements and oversight to maintain diversion focus, even with private operation
- Securing adequate funding through tip fees, grants, bonds, or other sources to cover capital and operating costs

The group grappled with balancing practical considerations, policy tools, and stakeholder interests in developing a regional transfer station strategy.

Questions

- What are the priority materials and recovery focus areas for the transfer stations? (e.g. bulky waste, regulated items, organics)
- What is a realistic timeline to have new/retrofitted transfer infrastructure operational, given the various steps involved?
- How can we ensure the transfer network maintains a focus on diversion and recovery, even if privately operated?
- What is the appropriate geographic scale and governance model (e.g. individual counties, regional cooperative, multi-county authority)?
- How can we structure the financing and ownership to balance public control with private expertise?
- What are the tradeoffs between truck transport vs. intermodal options like rail or barge in terms of cost, emissions, resilience?
- How can we design the transfer stations to provide space and flexibility for nonprofits and other diversion activities?
- What existing transfer stations could be quickly retrofitted versus the need for new, larger facilities?
- How can we address potential industry opposition and concerns about rate impacts?

- What contractual mechanisms or policies (e.g. flow control) are needed to guarantee inbound tonnage and support financing?

Action: Research and analysis

- Allegra Starr (RRS) mentioned adding the volume/tonnage information to the transfer station examples, as Commissioner Cameron had requested
- Jessi Just (Heart of Cartm) suggested looking into which existing transfer stations could be quickly retrofitted versus needing new, larger facilities. She offered to be involved in that assessment
- The group discussed the need to map out a phased timeline, with initial retrofits and then larger system design/construction, to try to achieve the 10-year operational goal
- There was interest in providing guidance or evidence-based recommendations around the ownership and governance models, to help avoid situations like what happened with Heart of Cartm
- Bryce Hesterman (RRS) mentioned the plan to put the discussion points into a Canva board for further feedback from the group over the next week