

# **COLUMBIA COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN**



Updated by  
Columbia County Public Works Department  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Columbia County Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) updates the county's initial plan adopted in 1998. Many local, state and international changes to solid waste management have occurred over this time. Oregon DEQ adopted the 2050 Vision, which recognizes the impacts of materials through their entire life cycle, and changed the name of their Solid Waste program to Materials Management to reflect this. Meanwhile, the international recycling market was upended by the "Green Fence" and "National Sword" policies in China, causing a global re-think about how recyclables should be managed, including a two-year effort by DEQ to radically redesign the roles of public and private entities in Oregon. Accordingly, this 2020 updated SWMP is designed to plan for the next five years, with annual reviews to nimbly adjust to changes. It contains information and alternatives to be used in assisting the County in its decision-making process. As specific recommendations are implemented, more detailed study and analysis may be needed to ensure the County's overall goals are attained. This plan is a tool to be used in guiding the County in not only proper management of solid waste at the end of life but also the a guide to managing materials through their entire life cycle; from reducing environmental impacts in extraction and production, use of toxics, preventing waste, reusing and repairing items to recycling. This guide focuses on the health and safety of the entire community from its residents to its environment.

This SWMP examines the solid waste and materials management system in Columbia County and explores options for improvements and refinements to that system. The SWMP was developed with the active participation of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC), which consists of representatives of the two franchise collection companies and citizens of Columbia County.

### **Section I. BACKGROUND**

There have been significant changes in solid waste and recycling since the 1998 plan was adopted. The SWMP is expected to help guide policies and programs for materials management, including traditional solid waste disposal and recycling in Columbia County for the next five years.

#### **Solid Waste Management**

In 1969, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality was established; by 1971, DEQ required permits for solid waste disposal sites. Columbia County created its Solid Waste Ordinance in 1977 and adopted a Solid Waste Management Plan in 1980.

The early 1980's new regulations were passed at the federal and State level that changed the way solid waste was to be managed. These new laws caused several change in Columbia County. Existing landfills were closed and, because Columbia County only generated about 28,000 tons of waste per year at the time, it was cost prohibitive to open new ones. To meet the needs of its constituents, the County built a system that could efficiently transport waste to a regional disposal site outside the County. Waste diversion activities are given a high priority by laws and policies in Oregon. A perceived shortage of landfill space, in part, led to passage of Oregon's first Opportunity to Recycle Act in 1983. This Act also established solid waste management policies that recognized the environmental benefits of waste prevention, reuse and recycling; stating that in order to conserve energy and natural resources, solid waste management should follow a hierarchy.

- Reduce the amount of waste generated;
- Reuse materials for their original intended use;
- Recycle what can't be reused;
- Compost what can't be reused or recycled;
- Recover energy from what cannot be reused, recycled or composted, and finally;
- Dispose of residuals safely.

The 1983 Act also required wastesheds to have recycling depots. A "wasteshed" is defined in Oregon law as being an area of the state that shares a common solid waste disposal system, or an appropriate area in which to develop a common recycling system. Wasteshed boundaries are typically the same as counties (except for the City of Milton-Freewater and Metro). The 1991 Oregon Recycling Act (SB 66) strengthened and broadened recycling requirements and set a statewide recovery goal of 50% by 2000 and established interim recovery goals for individual wastesheds by 1995.

During this time new State laws required local governments and service providers to implement programs aimed at reducing waste and recycling resources. In response to these requirements, in 1998, the County developed a comprehensive strategy for accomplishing the recycling goals imposed upon the County.

Since developing the 1998 comprehensive strategy Columbia County has accomplished many of its goals. Amongst them setting and reaching a recovery rate of 27%, establishing residential collections program, designed and currently operating a transfer station, developed a franchise agreement, established a program to address illegal dumping and established a collection site and program for household hazardous waste

In 2001, DEQ confirmed to legislators that the original wasteshed goals would not produce a statewide recovery goal of 50%. Some wastesheds, particularly large ones, would have to do more to enable the state to meet its goal. This reality was reflected in legislation unanimously passed in 2001 (HB 3744). HB 3744 set a statewide recovery goal of 45% for 2005 and 50% for 2009. In order to help meet the statewide recovery goals, all of the wastesheds set new voluntary recovery goals for 2005 and 2009 and submitted plans to DEQ for how they planned to meet their new goals. For wastesheds that did not achieve their 2005 or 2009 waste recovery goal, HB 3744 required the wasteshed to conduct a technical review of existing policies or programs and determine revisions to be implemented to meet the recovery goal

### **Transition to Materials Management \***

In 2011, DEQ convened a workgroup to help develop a long-term vision and framework for responsible materials management in Oregon. The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission adopted the resulting Materials Management in Oregon: 2050 Vision and Framework for Action (2050 Vision). The 2050 Vision is also Oregon's State Integrated Resource and Solid Waste Management Plan. The 2050 Vision guides statewide policy for managing materials throughout their full life cycles, including recovery, reduction, reuse, and recycling.

In June 2015, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB 263). SB 263 better enables DEQ, local governments, and Oregonians to make progress under the 2050 Vision. Among other things, SB 263:

- Raised statewide recovery rates;
- Set statewide material-specific recovery rates for food waste, plastic waste, and carpet waste;
- Made wastesheds' self-determined recovery goals voluntary to give local governments more flexibility;
- Increased to thirteen the number of recycling program elements available to local governments (effective Jan. 1, 2018, per rule);
- Amended the expanded education and promotion program element to include a contamination reduction education aspect (effective Jan. 1, 2018, per rule);
- Increased minimum numbers of recycling program elements required for certain cities based on their population sizes and distances from Portland (effective Jan. 1, 2018, per rule);
- Added seven waste prevention education and reuse program elements, requiring minimums ranging from three to five elements depending on cities' populations or location within Metro (effective Jan. 1, 2018, per rule);
- Allows a local government using a DEQ-approved alternative program the flexibility of meeting either the lesser of its recovery goal or recovery levels comparable to similar communities (effective Jan. 1, 2018, per rule);
- Expands statewide the opportunity to recycle to residential and commercial tenants of multi-tenant properties with collection service (effective July 1, 2022, per statute); and
- Permits DEQ to develop outcome-based recovery goals to measure recovery using methods besides materials' weight, such as energy savings.
- Revenue to fund DEQ expenses directly related to the proposed rules was anticipated during the development of Senate Bill 245 (SB 245), which allowed for increases in tipping fees. The legislature also passed SB 245 in June 2015 as a companion to SB 263.

\* (from the Oregon DEQ website

<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/recycling/Pages/Oregon%27s-Recycling-Laws.aspx> )

### **Current recovery goals**

Under Oregon's recycling laws, the State's mandatory rate of material recovery from the general solid waste stream is 52 percent for 2020. That rises to 55 percent for 2025 and subsequent years. The law also sets mandatory statewide material-specific recovery rates for:

- Food waste – 25 percent by 2020;
- Plastic waste – 25 percent by 2020; and
- Carpet waste – 25 percent by 2025.

DEQ measures the state's progress through statewide surveys and waste characterization and composition studies. DEQ must report to the Legislature on whether the recovery goals are being met. Each wasteshed – Oregon counties, Metro, and the City of Milton-Freewater – also has its own voluntary recovery goal in statute. Wastesheds set their recovery goals through whatever methods they chose. Wastesheds' recovery goals vary from highs of 64 percent for Metro and Marion County to 20 percent in some counties.

## Anticipating future changes

### Recycling

**The Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act** was signed by Governor Brown on Aug. 6, 2021. The new law will overhaul Oregon's outdated recycling system by building on local community programs and leveraging the resources of producers to create an innovative system that works for everyone in Oregon. The Oregon Legislature passed the Recycling Modernization Act (Senate Bill 582) during the 2021 Legislative Session. DEQ is working on an implementation plan and will share more information soon. The law becomes effective Jan. 1, 2022. Recycling program changes will begin in July 2025 or later.

The Recycling Modernization Act is a significant overhaul of state policy that will modernize Oregon's recycling system. 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. Producers and manufacturers of packaging, paper products and food service ware will pay for many of these necessary improvements and help ensure recycling is successful in Oregon

Following several years of economic challenges, uncertainty about where our recyclables go and increasing local costs, Oregon's recycling system was in crisis. In 2018, Oregon DEQ convened a group of recycling system stakeholders – including local governments, recycling industry businesses and other experts – to study these issues and propose a solution. Their Recycling Steering Committee (RSC) was made up of DEQ and representatives from local and state governments, businesses and other organizations that play a role in Oregon recycling approved shared responsibility framework that addresses challenges in the State's 40 year old recycling system. The Recycling Steering Committee's goal was to ensure the recycling system optimizes benefits for the environment, is strong and adaptable to change, and restores and maintains public trust in the system.

The legislation received strong support from local governments, the recycling industry and environmental advocacy groups throughout the 2021 legislative session. Many Oregon-based businesses also supported the changes – businesses like New Seasons Market, Bob's Red Mill, and Rogue Creamery.

In the new system, producers will join in a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) that will fund improvements to the system and ensure the recyclables that are collected go to responsible end markets. A new uniform statewide collection list will allow individuals and businesses to recycle the same items across the state, at home and at work. Recycling services will be expanded under the direction of local governments, especially for rural communities and people living in apartments, with support from producer funding. The same private collection companies will continue to provide recycling services in local communities. Processing of recyclable materials will be done in facilities that meet new performance standards, including for material quality, reporting, and paying living wages to facility workers.

### Household Hazardous Waste

Metro has proposed statewide legislation to require brand owners to pay the costs of proper disposal of retail products that contain hazardous or toxic materials. Though it has not yet been successful in moving this concept for a full vote of the Legislative Assembly, they will be introducing it again in proposed legislation in the 2021-22 session. Such a program could have a significant impact on what Columbia County collects and how the program is financed.

## **Section II UPDATING PROCESS**

This updated 2020 SWMP has been guided by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC). The Solid Waste Advisory Committee serves in an advisory and technical capacity to Board on matters relating to how the county manages solid waste disposal and recycling services. Committee members provide feedback and make recommendations regarding solid waste policies, regulations and programs, as well as the operation of the county's transfer station in St. Helens. This group represents citizens and service providers

The updated 2020 SWMP looks to finish the work set out in the plan in 1998, comply with updated DEQ requirements (<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/recycling/Pages/Oregon%27s-Recycling-Laws.aspx>) and prepare for new state and international changes. As we look toward 2050 and utilize the Oregon DEQ Vision, additional goals will emphasize waste prevention, reduction of toxins, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and look at the entirety of a product's life cycle.

### **In 1998 the goals were to implement a coordinated approach that would:**

- Educate businesses and households on the benefits of reducing waste and recycling more materials and promote use of recycling and other services;
- Continue to build upon the agreements with cities to develop a coordinated approach for providing services;
- Optimize the recovery of recyclables to avoid the cost of transporting waste to remote disposal sites and paying disposal cost; and
- Implement agreements with the private sector to carry out the efficient collection and transportation of solid waste to appropriate disposal sites outside the County.

### **In 2020 we are expanding on the original goals with emphasis on health, safety and prevention of waste**

- Increase the knowledge among the community members on the benefits of preventing waste, reducing toxins, promoting recycling, reuse and repair and other services
- Increase the reuse, repair and donation of materials and consumer products.
- Continue to work to eliminate illegal dumping and toxins from the community, expand the Dumpstoppers Program, improve the household hazardous waste collection, expand the Sharps Container exchange program, expand battery collection and assist with education with the Public Health Department regarding unwanted medicine.
- Continue to build upon the agreements with cities to develop a coordinated approach for providing services;
- Continue to improve the systems for recovering recyclables, food scraps and yard debris to make them resilient to the changing markets and evolving community needs;
- Continue to improve on the agreements with the private sector to carry out the efficient collection and transportation of solid waste, recyclables, food waste and yard debris to appropriate facilities outside of the County. Such improvements include updating the Franchise Agreement and the Detailed Cost Review; and
- Implement a Disaster Resilience Plan, to include effective coordination between hauler and the County on the impact of disasters on the solid waste system, ensuring operations can be restored quickly following a disaster, and updating the disaster debris plan regularly.

## **Section III KEY ISSUES FOR THE 2020 SWMP**

The focus of the 2020 updated SWMP is the health and safety of everyone in Columbia County. This updated plan will examine the progress made from 1998 to present and recommend how to improve the performance of existing programs, identify deficiencies in the present system and recommend how the County may best spend its resources to efficiently meet the demands of the solid waste system in the future. SWMP looks at current facilities in the County and at existing agreements for delivering services to establish how these arrangements can be modified to meet the planning goals

### **The key issues from 1998 were as follows:**

1. Establish the future role of the County in providing waste Prevention, recycling and solid waste services
2. Develop a focused waste Prevention program
3. Evaluate the current St. Helens Transfer Station and determine what facilities are needed to meet the long-term needs of the County.
4. Examine existing programs for addressing illegal dumping and nuisance abatement and recommend actions to enhance these programs.

### **The key issues for 2020 are:**

1. Develop a focused program to reduce toxins (illegal dumping, hazardous waste, asbestos, medical waste, etc.)
2. Expand the waste reduction and create a waste prevention program
3. Expand the current Columbia County Transfer Station to include a reuse facility and determine what additional facilities are needed to meet the long-term needs of the County
4. Expand on the role of the County in delivering solid waste and recycling services and determine the resource requirements.

The SWMP looks at each component of the solid waste system including toxin reduction, waste prevention and recycling, collection, transfer, and disposal. Discussion of the issues and alternatives are presented in corresponding chapters of the Plan. The result is a document that can be used to guide solid waste management decisions for the next 5 to 10 years. It would be desirable to update the plan every 5 to 7 years.

## **Key Plan Actions**

Each of the following chapters of the plan contains actions for advancing materials management, in a comprehensive and coordinated approach.

These recommendations are designed to build upon existing infrastructure to establish the framework for implementing specific programs.

## Section IV Action Plans

The focus of this update in 2020 is to evaluate the progress made since 1998, expand on the original goals and recommend how the County may best spend its resources to efficiently meet the demands materials management in the future.

1. Continue to be the Columbia County wasteshed coordinator for the state
  - a. State law charges the counties and cities with the responsibility to make sure minimum requirements are in place, as the wasteshed coordinator the state sends all the reports and updated requirements to the county for distribution, the county updates the cites and coordinates collection of the annual reports (Opportunity to Recycle, Materials Recovery report, etc.) on a timely basis
2. Continue to monitor the needs of the community and prioritize the county's role is delivering solid waste, waste prevention services and determine resource requirement
3. Develop a focused program to reduce toxins/poisons: illegal dumping, hazardous waste, asbestos, medical waste, etc.
4. Expand the waste reduction programs, create waste prevention programs and promote sustainable production and consumption. Including:
  - a. Expand the current Columbia County Transfer Station to include a reuse facility and determine what additional facilities are needed to meet the long-term needs of the County
  - b. Evaluate and implement means to collect and compost yard debris and woody waste.
5. Continued measurement and monitoring of collection and processing options to reduce the amount of waste transported out of county



# Updated Actions for Columbia County SWMP

Actions for each component are presented on the following pages.

## **1. Waste Prevention and Reuse**

In order to meet state mandates for county recovery goals and public education and to emphasize waste prevention as a priority, it is recommended that the County and its cities implement the following programs for waste reduction:

### **1. Continue to provide and expand programs to reduce toxins in the county. Keeping residents safe is the highest priority of this plan**

- a) Promote proper handling and disposal of Hazardous Waste and continue to provide household hazardous waste collection programs for residents
  - a. For the safety of staff , the county will provide OSHA HAZWOPER training to all county staff that may encounter hazardous materials
  - b. Continue to expand and promote the Household Hazardous Waste Collection programs offered throughout the county.
    - i. The current program as of 2020 offers four collection events on Saturdays at the HHW building and three remote collection events at temporary sites in Vernonia, Rainier and Clatskanie
      1. Annually create, promote and distribute the HHW collection calendar with dates, items collected, locations, proper handling and proper transport of HHW
        - a. Information will be distributed as printed flyers, ads in local newspaper, the county website and on social media
      2. Expand opportunities for residents to dispose of HHW in addition to the current Columbia County program
        - a. Research creating on online appointment only option for residents unable to utilize the current Saturday HHW collection programs
        - b. Research feasibility of Curbside HHW collection for residents unable to deliver hazardous material to the transfer station
      3. Assist all county schools with an inventory of chemicals
        - a. Provide assistance with safe removal of hazardous chemicals
    - ii. Provide assistance to area nonprofits business regarding proper disposal of hazardous chemical
    - iii. Promote and educate area businesses on proper disposal of hazardous materials
      1. Provide list of vendors providing disposal services
- b) Promote alternatives to household hazardous items, in addition to providing collection service.
  - a. Distribute information from Oregon DEQ regarding safe alternatives via the county website, flyers, and articles

- c) Promote and Expand Sharps Safety and proper handling and disposal program
  - a. Continue to promote and expand the sharps container exchange program. The program started in October 2016, for a one-time fee of \$5.00 residents registered for the program at the Columbia County transfer station, received an OSHA approved red Sharps container, when full returned it and receive an empty one for free.

In April 21, 2021, the program expanded to five out county fire districts (Clatskanie Rural Fire Protection District, Columbia River Fire & Rescue – Rainier Station, Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Protection District, Scappoose Rural Fire District and Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District). The program is now free to Columbia County residents.

- b. Continue to make sure Sharps Containers in cabinets are installed and maintained in all county public restrooms
- d) Assist Police Departments and Public Health with promotion on proper disposal of unwanted medicine. Currently some Police Departments and a few pharmacies have a MedReturn box in their lobby
  - a. Promote the [Oregon Drug-Take Back Program](#) which launched on July 1, 2021, offering Oregon residents a convenient, safe, and secure way to dispose of unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medicines. The program includes free disposal options for residents across the state, including take-back boxes at pharmacies and law enforcement agencies, and prepaid, preaddressed envelopes for mailing in unwanted medicines.
- e) Continue to promote the PaintCare and Oregon E-Waste Program available at the Columbia County Transfer station
  - a. Research expansion options; potential annual electronic collection in conjunction with existing annual bulky waste collections
- f) Develop additional programs as needed by the county

**2. Develop and coordinate a county task force to expand the collection and distribution of reusable items in partnership with reuse and repair organizations, the task force will:**

- a) Develop and distribute information regarding all the county wide reuse and repair services
- b) Increase media coverage for reuse and repair options while promoting all the organization providing the services
- c) Develop the proposed Reuse center at the Columbia County transfer station
  - a. Utilize the reuse center as a site for residents and businesses to drop off reusable items free of charge
  - b. Items will be distributed to area nonprofits
  - c. Support efforts to ensure surplus edible food is received and distributed by the county's agencies
  - d. Work with area agencies to acquire additional storage to accommodate surplus donations
- d) Support implementation of Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality's Reuse,
  - a. Repair and Extended Product Lifespan Strategic Plan
- e) Promote rental options,
- f) Promote Borrowing and lending
  - a. The Library of Things a collection of items that moves beyond the traditional materials found at a library) at the St. Helens Public Library

- 3. Develop programs for the reuse or recycling of construction and demolition waste**
  - a) Research reuse options in the county and regional markets for recycling of ceiling tiles, gypsum wallboard, brick, concrete, roofing and tarpaper, wood, insulation and other building materials
- 4. Develop and distribute educational and promotional materials about waste prevention, waste-reducing products and purchasing behaviors, and about their environmental and economic benefits. County staff should provide resources and coordination to accomplish these objectives. Activities include:**
  - a) Develop targeted factsheets related to hazardous waste prevention and reduction, proper disposal of asbestos, lead, Sharps and unwanted medicine, home composting, and other waste prevention and reduction methods. Obtain existing, information materials and promotional ideas from regional resources.
  - b) Develop an online site and hotline for information on where to dispose, recycle, reuse and repair items in Columbia County
  - c) In conjunction with collection companies, present informational materials at fairs and community events;
  - d) Post repair/rental/resale information prominently and widely, including at the transfer station, and promote them in brochures produced by haulers, businesses and government.
- 5. Create government policy and directives to minimize waste within public agencies.**
  - a) Provide information to all departments on how this can be done.
  - b) Review procurement policies and practices; change as needed.
  - c) Provide seminars and informational materials on what worked and what did not. Recipients to include other local governments, public agencies, businesses and business associations, and the media.
  - d) Seek interlocal coordination for waste prevention and reduction practices.
- 6. Encourage and support school use of materials management curricula.**
  - a) Provide County staff assistance in making presentations, guiding field trips, and acquiring curriculum materials.
  - b) Enlist cities and civic groups to request schools offer these studies.
  - c) Support school efforts with curricula and teacher training sessions from DEQ, Metro and other regional educational agencies.
  - d) Provide schools a list of information and educational resources beyond those available from local government.
- 7. Maintain Solid Waste Fund**
  - a) Maintain dedicated franchise and tonnage fees to fund solid waste programs.
  - b) Review fees every five years – last review was in 2017

## **2. Recycling Collection and Education**

In 1998 the emphasis was on recovery goals. In order to meet state mandates (HB3456) for County recovery goals, public education and to emphasize recycling and other forms of waste reduction as a priority, the County, with the assistance of the cities, needs to implement cost effective, sustainable recycling programs. At the time a recovery goal of 27 percent which was the minimum required goal based on the 1995 recovery rate. By 2013 after achieving nearly 35% recovery rate the goal was increased to 45%.

In January of 2018 recycling markets changed dramatically when China enacted its “National Sword” policy, in January 2018, and banned the import of most plastics and other materials headed for that nation's recycling processors, which had handled nearly half of the world's recyclable waste for the past quarter century. The County has not been able to achieve its previous recovery rates.

### **1. Set recovery rate goal at 27% with a goal of a contamination rate of under 5%**

As of 2020, DEQ no longer mandates a minimum goal for recovery, it is reasonable to reset the recovery rate to the goal to 27% given the reduced markets available for mixed materials. The current recovery rate is 24.4% to ensure marketability it is imperative to maintain a contamination rate under five percent

In 2018 Columbia County, the City of St Helens and the City of Scappoose choose to implement the expanded education and promotion program element (3)(c) in accordance with Oregon Administrative Rule [340-090-040](#). In 2019 the Contamination Reduction Education Plan was approved by regional DEQ staff. The franchises, the County and the Cities will continue to utilize the Contamination Reduction Education Plan and continue to review and improve it.

### **2. Expand residential collection programs based on cost-effectiveness and DEQ requirement. Currently all residents in Columbia County have access to curbside solid waste and recycling collection if they choose to opt into the service. Bulky waste collection is available to all residents who opt into curbside collection.**

a) **Yard debris and food waste collection** if nearby mulch and compost markets can be developed, consider depot-based yard debris collection, grinding and composting.

a) Effective promotion and reduced disposal fees for yard debris would enhance participation.

#### **b) Research possibility of curbside collection of other source separated items for recycling**

a) Glass

b) Electronics

c) paint

**3. Continue to provide educational and promotional materials about how, where and when to recycle, in conjunction with Recommendation 3-4.**

**Develop and distribute educational and promotional materials about waste prevention, waste-reducing products and purchasing behaviors, and about their environmental and economic benefits.**

- a) County website will highlight targeted brochures and fact sheets,
- b) Cities and County continue to ensure haulers provide information four times yearly to all customers, as required by law, with increased focus on asking people to prevent waste and recycle
- c) Increase media coverage, including TV and radio, spurred by the news hook of continuing developments in the County, cities and commercial sector; and by requesting coverage and providing informational materials.
- d) Obtain existing information materials and promotional ideas from regional resources.
- e) Present informational materials at fairs and community events.
- f) Request donation of ad space and community, group involvement to support these efforts.

**4. Expand City/County coordination.**

- a) Expand public education efforts, in cooperation with collection companies and cities.
- b) County/cities cooperate in improving commercial and multifamily recycling efforts and promotion.
- c) Waste prevention: initiatives should be as county-wide as possible, to create sense of community policy and to optimize public investments.
- d) Local jurisdictions jointly endorse and publicize request to public to do waste prevention and recycling.
- e) Public sector waste prevention and recycling would benefit from sharing of information through periodic joint task forces.

**5. Maintain solid waste fees to fund solid waste program**

- a) Utilize solid waste fee to fund staff and educational programs on waste prevention and recycling

### **3. Materials Processing**

In order to meet the County waste prevention and recovery goals and maintain reasonable costs of disposal, it is recommended that the County and its cities implement the following measures:

#### **1. Continue evaluation of the current collection franchise agreements to increase recovery from garbage at reasonable rates.**

The County established franchise and rate agreements to ensure materials processing and recovery:

- a) In 2011 the Detailed Cost Review was implemented, the DCR should be continually reviewed to assure the determining cost factors are still relevant and the resulting cost review of the rates assures fair and reasonable rates
- b) Evaluate collection fee rate incentives and requirements to encourage selective routing and high-gradable loads rich in recyclable/recoverable items (cardboard, office paper, wood, metals).
- c) Evaluate disposal fees that encourage high-gradable loads. Offer cheaper disposal for highly recoverable loads (wood, cardboard, metals, office paper) and higher fees for loads not lending themselves to recovery to help cover costs of new equipment.

#### **2. Ensure adequate capacity at the transfer station**

- a) Continue to monitor and evaluate handling capacity at the Columbia County transfer station to process municipal solid waste.
  - a. Since opening in 2006 MSW has increased nearly 28%, from 28,000 tons annually to nearly 34,000 tons annually in 2019. The population has increased nearly 12% from 46,663 residents in 2005 to 52,750 in 2019 (Population Research Center (PRC)). Projected growth for 2034 from PRC is approximately 8% 56,116 residents and if MSW increased by 20% or 40,000 tons annually, the current infrastructure can handle the increases.
- b) Continue to review handling and storage capacity for all recyclables materials at the recycling depot
  - a. Review location and positioning of recycling bins
    - i. Per the permit the recycling depot is conveniently located and is available to every person whose solid waste enters the facility. Reference: OAR 340-093-0160 3
    - ii. Monitor accessibility
  - b. Monitor contamination
  - c. Review and update informational signs
    - i. Update signage regarding materials accepted for recycling and
    - ii. Update instructions for correct preparation of accepted source separated recyclable material;

#### **3. Evaluate expanding yard waste collection program to include food waste and service the entire county.** Currently yard waste is accepted at the transfer station at a reduced rate and at the curb in the cities of Columbia City, St Helens and Scappoose

- a) Evaluate a composting facility for the entire county
- b) Facilitate site permitting if warranted.
- c) Evaluate benefits of adding Food waste collection program
- d) Assist supply and markets through interlocal agreements. Public agencies are a major source and market for compost. Materials should be directed to the site.
- e) Continual review of reduced "disposal" rates for yard debris to make sure it is reasonable.
- f) Continue to promote yard waste program.

## **4. Refuse Collection**

Since 1998 a franchise agreement was developed and in 2011 the Detailed Rate Review Process was created. Waste Management and Waste Connections are the two franchises for Columbia County, both franchises provide curbside collection service for the entire county. Rates for collection are reviewed each year, the Franchises submit information utilizing the Detailed Rate Review form, Columbia County Public Works staff and the at-large members of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee review the submitted information and the proposed rates. After review the staff and SWAC make a recommendation to the Columbia County Board of Commissioners (BOC) regarding the annual solid waste rate, BOC vote on recommended rate.

### **Collection**

#### **1. Review, evaluate and update the Collection and Drop Box Franchise Agreement developed in 1998.**

- a) Thorough review of the two franchise agreements
  - Evaluate renewal process

#### **2. Review and update the Detailed Cost Rate (DCR) Review developed in 2011**

- a) Continual review rate structure
- b) Review DCR indicators

#### **3. Continual improvement for systems for recovering recyclables**

- a) Add more depots to serve residents not utilizing curbside collection
  - Currently there is a recycling depot
    - At the transfer station
    - At the City of Vernonia Transfer Station and
    - In the city of Clatskanie
- b) Add electronics recycling depots, currently the only recycling collection site for electronics is the Columbia County Transfer Station
- c) Add more PaintCare collections site
  - Currently there are three PaintCare collection sites
    - At the transfer station
    - At the City of Vernonia at the Vernonia Hardware
    - Columbia County Habitat for Humanity in St. Helens
- d) Add glass depots– for areas where glass is not collected at the curb. Satellite sites can bolster glass recycling ( [https://resource-recycling.com/recycling/2019/12/17/county-bolsters-glass-recycling-by-pulling-it-from-curb/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=internal&utm\\_campaign=Dec+17+RR](https://resource-recycling.com/recycling/2019/12/17/county-bolsters-glass-recycling-by-pulling-it-from-curb/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=internal&utm_campaign=Dec+17+RR))
  - Currently the three glass depots are located
    - At the transfer station
    - In the city of Rainier and
    - In the city of Clatskanie

## **5. Refuse Processing**

**Since February 2006 Columbia County has owned and contracts out the operations of the Transfer Station at 1601 Railroad Ave, St Helens**

The current operator is Hudson Garbage DBA Waste Connections. The operating agreement expires in 2026.

### **Transfer Station**

The Columbia County Transfer Station (CCTS) is a solid waste and recyclable materials receiving center for Columbia County. Solid waste received at the transfer station from self-haulers (public), curbside pickup, and commercial routes is transported to an approved landfill. The CCTS receives recyclable materials from residential and commercial curbside collection. Recyclable materials are then transported to material processing facilities for processing and shipment to either domestic or foreign markets.

The 16,300-square-foot transfer station is used for receiving, temporary storage, compaction, and shipment of solid waste from self-haulers (public) and curbside pickup. Site personnel oversee the unloading and remove recyclable materials when possible. Once the recyclables are removed, the waste is transferred into the compactor and loaded into transfer trailers. When full, the trailer is transported by truck to the landfill for disposal.

#### **1. Continually Review and Update the Transfer Station Operations Plan**

- a. Review all safety procedures
  - i. Update security system
- b. Continual review of traffic flow
- c. Continual review of recycling area layout
- d. Continual review and update all equipment
  - i. Compactor installed October 2019
  - ii. Push wall repaired October 2019
  - iii. Tipping floor as of November 2020 needs repair

## **6. Disposal and Transportation Contract**

Columbia County owns and operates the Columbia County Transfer Station located at 1601 Railroad Avenue, St. Helens, Oregon, 97051.

Columbia County currently contracts with Waste Connections of Oregon for Transfer Station operations, and Republic Services Coffin Butte Landfill for transportation and disposal of all solid waste generated within Columbia County and its cities. As of November 7, the Request for Proposals is for transport and disposal of waste from the Columbia County Transfer Station to a qualified disposal site only, was submitted, it closes December 10, 2020.

The total amount of solid waste accepted at the transfer station for the year 2019 was approximately 35,000 tons. The average daily amounts to approximately 113 tons.

Presently, Columbia County franchises curbside residential and commercial solid waste collection outside of incorporated cities within the County. The cities of St Helens, Scappoose, Rainier, Columbia City, Clatskanie and Vernonia franchise curbside residential and commercial solid waste collection within their respective city limits.

Under provisions of an intergovernmental agreement between Columbia County and all of its cities, all solid waste generated within Columbia County and within its cities is collected and hauled to the Columbia County Transfer Station for transfer and disposal.

1. Continual review of contract and add updates as new options are available regarding waste prevention, recycling and disposal options

## **7. Illegal Dumping**

The County created an Illegal Dumping task force in 2002. In 2009 the Dumpstoppers Program was started at the recommendation of the county task force on illegal dumping. Funding for staff, truck and equipment is provided from the Solid Waste Fund. A complaint hotline was established in 2011; in 2019 a fillable complaint form was added to the county website. Annual bulky waste pickup days are offered by franchises to make it easier and cheaper to dispose of bulky items

- 1. Clean-up existing illegal dump sites to prevent illegal sites from becoming issues**
  - a. With funding from the Solid Waste Fund utilizing the Columbia County work crew in coordination with Columbia County Code Compliance staff and the Solid Waste Program Coordinator
  - b. As complaints are submitted county staff investigates site and coordinates clean up
  - c. Maintain data base of cases
- 2. Develop and coordinate a program to safely manage and dispose of abandoned derelict vehicles throughout the county. The problem is anticipated to continue into the future.**
- 3. Expand the public awareness campaign.**
  - a. Continue to publicize the Dumpstoppers complaint hotline number and the county complaint form on the website
  - b. Utilizing bumper stickers, signs, local ads (newsprint, radio, social media)
  - c. Work with press to present problem, enforcement activities and successes.
  - d. Provide prevention message and follow up with enforcement options
  - e. Involve citizens
  - f. Sponsor high profile cleanups; public awareness campaigns
  - g. Register volunteers
  - h. Consider coordinating ADOPT A ROAD for the County
- 4. Utilize variety of investigation techniques such as:**
  - a. Sting operations
  - b. Trace dumped materials.
  - c. Interviews - Citizen informants
- 5. Utilize variety of prevention techniques**
  - a. focused on developing solutions that would reduce and/or eliminate the problem of illegal dumping
  - b. Signs, cameras, guardrails, public awareness, and laws.
- 6. Expand annual bulky waste collection events currently offered by Franchises agreements**
  - a. Provide convenient, well-promoted and (to the public) inexpensive collection events at least twice yearly.

7. **Establish reasonable, predictable costs for the services needed.**
  - a. Ensure reasonable cost for cleaning up illegal accumulations of garbage. Develop cost and performance standards and lists of pre-approved terms and contractors.
8. **Require property owners to make provisions for garbage service for rentals** to make it less attractive/possible to avoid garbage collection fees.
9. **Ensure sufficient funding and recovery of costs for clean-up.**
  - a. Identify annual clean-up budgets.
  - b. Follow up on filing to collect through liens, garnishings, tax collection and penalty fees.
  - c. Ensure that County legal staff pursue outstanding debts.

## **8. Special Waste Handling**

1. **The County should include in franchise agreements a fee for providing collection and hauling services for special events such as handling of waste from weather-related events.**
2. **The County should obtain a special rate for disposal of waste generated from weather-related events** when the County renegotiates or bids out disposal services.

## **9. Administration and Enforcement**

The Solid Waste Division is part of the Columbia County Public Works Department and serves as the wasteshed for the county. The Director of Public Works serves as the Solid Waste Administer, support staff include the Solid Waste Program Coordinator and funding for enforcement is provided to the Sheriff Department and Code Compliance Specialists in Land Development.

The Solid Waste Advisory Committee provides guidance to the program. Final administrative rules are approved by the Board of Commissioners. The Public Works Department's Solid Waste Division updates the Solid Waste Ordinance and the Solid Waste Management Plan with input from SWAC.

1. **The County maintains the dedicated solid waste fund.** The level of funding will vary depending on program requirements and materials and service needs for each year. Utilize the Solid Waste Fund to maintain staff resources for managing all solid waste activities from prevention to reuse to proper disposal and include funding for enforcement (Sheriff Department and Code Compliance).