GLOSSARY

A/B

Anaerobic Digester – Machinery that processes organic waste with microorganisms and limited oxygen, the combination of which generates methane and carbon dioxide fo r the purposes of burning for fuel.

Backyard compost – A variety of methods of decomposing organic material to create a soil amendment. Organic material that should be composted in a backyard compost pile includes food scraps and grass clippings, leaves, garden waste. No meat, dairy, grains, pet waste or paper products.

Bins – A small rectangular plastic 14 gallon container with handles. In most parts of the metro region this container is only used to collect glass. But in some areas it is still used for other recyclables as well. Some parts of the region also refer to these containers as curbies.

Biodegradable material – Materials that can be broken down by micro organisms into simple stable compounds such as carbon dioxide and water. Most organic material such as yard debris, wood, food scraps and paper are biodegradable

Browns – A term used to denote organic materials high in carbon, more specifically, materials whose carbon to nitrogen ratio is higher than 30:1. Materials high in nitrogen are referred to as greens. Browns and Greens are two factors in creating favorable conditions for backyard pile composting along with water and air.

C

Castings – Manure, i.e., excretion, of earthworms. Earthworm castings are high in nutrients for plants and microorganisms.

Collection – The component of a waste management system which results in the passage of a waste material from the end user to a point of recovery, a transfer station, or final disposal.

Commercial waste – Waste materials originated from wholesale, retail, institutional or service establishments, such as office buildings, stores, markets, theatres, hotels, and warehouses. Rental housing with five units or more are also considered commercial waste customers.

Compost – The decomposition or processing of organic material to create a soil amendment. A secondary objective of composting is to treat aerobically degradable materials that may otherwise enter landfills from decomposing anaerobically, releasing greenhouse gases.

Commercial Compost Facility – A large scale commercially or municipally-owned facility designed to decompose and/or digest organic material. In Oregon, commercial compost facilities must have permits that ensure they manage stormwater, vector and odor. Permits and technology determine organic accepted material. Some regional compost facilities accept just yard and landscape debris. Some manage only food. Others manage food scraps and limited food-soiled paper. Washington facilities accept a broader range of food-soiled paper and some biodegradable plastics.

Consumption – The purchase or use of goods and services for satisfaction of a need or want.

Construction – A process that consists of the building or assembling of infrastructure.

Contamination – 1) Unintended materials mixing with desired materials for recycling or compost (glass is a contaminant in a paper stream); 2) Materials that are too soiled, such as with food or dirt, to be recyclable.

Cullet – Recycled or waste glassed use in glassmaking.

Curbside collection program – An on-site waste and recycling collection system for residents and businesses.

D

Deconstruction – The selective dismantlement of building components, specifically for the separation of materials for re-use, recycling, energy recovery, and waste management.

Demolition – The expedient tearing-down of buildings and other structures previous to retrieving the materials for reuse or recycling. Materials must be separated afterward by hand or in a Materials Recovery Facility.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) – The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is a regulatory agency whose job is to protect the quality of Oregon's environment. DEQ is the agency responsible in Oregon for setting waste management goals and evaluating recovery rates.

Discards Management – The use and reuse of materials based on the environmental and social impacts associated with the end of the life of the materials. Usually used in contrast to Materials Management.

Downcycling – The process of converting waste material into new material or products which results in loss of viability or value of the material.

E

Ecosystem – A natural unit consisting of all plants, animals and micro-organisms (biotic factors) in an area functioning together with all of the non-living physical (abiotic) factors of the environment.

Ecosystem services – The benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living.

Electronics – Any device (television, radio, computer, appliance etc.) that operates with an electrical current and often has small working parts such as microchips.

Electronic Waste (e-waste) – Discarded, surplus, obsolete, broken electrical or electronic devices. E-waste is generally associated with computers, but can include anything you might plug in or use a battery to operate (e.g. iron, toaster, TV, iPod).

Embodied energy – The energy that was used in the making of a material or product.

Energy – A variety of phenomena utilized by humans from the use of natural resources. Primary uses are for electricity, heat (including gas stove burners), production and transportation of goods, and electronic communications. Oregon receives approximately 40 percent of its energy from the burning of coal, 40 percent from hydro, and a mix of other sources for the remaining 20 percent. Many utility companies, including Portland General Electric and Pacific Power, offer clean energy programs, through which an additional charge to a resident's bill will go exclusively to the purchasing of renewable energy. Energy conservation practices demand side efforts targeted at conserving available energy resources.

Environment – 1) Complete ecological units that function as natural systems without massive human intervention, including all vegetation, animals, microorganisms, soil, rocks, atmosphere and natural phenomena that occur within their boundaries. 2) Universal natural resources and physical phenomena that lack clear-cut boundaries, such as air, water, and climate, as well as energy, radiation, electric charge, and magnetism, not originating from human activity.

Equity – The right of every person to have access to opportunities necessary for satisfying essential needs and advancing their well-being.

F

Food Scrap – Waste composed of raw or cooked food materials. It includes both food materials discarded before or during food preparation, such as vegetable peelings, meat trimmings, and spoiled or excess ingredients, and those discarded after food preparation, including excess or spoiled food.

Franchise – A contract between haulers and local governments that allots specific territories and requires standardized services and fees.

G

Grasscycling – Leaving grass clippings on your lawn after mowing to break down and add nutrients.

Green Chemistry – The design of chemical products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances. Green chemistry applies across the life cycle of a chemical product, including its design, manufacture, use, and ultimate disposal. Green chemistry is also known as sustainable chemistry.

Greenwashing – The practice of companies disingenuously spinning or marketing their products and policies as environmentally friendly.

H

Hauler – A private company that collects garbage, yard debris/compost and recycling.

Hazardous Waste – Waste that poses substantial or potential threats to public health or the environment. Properties frequently included are: carcinogenic, ignitable, oxidant, corrosive, toxic, radioactive, and explosive. U.S. environmental laws further describe a hazardous waste as a waste that has the potential to cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality (death) or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible illness; or pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of, or otherwise managed.

Hazardous Products – Products or contents of produced goods which have potential negative effects to human or environmental health through their production, use or disposal. Such products usually have a safe or healthier alternative and require proper disposal methods.

High-grade processing – Systems in which loads rich in recyclable materials are run through equipment that separates usable materials from contaminants.

I

Incineration – A waste treatment technology that involves the combustion of waste materials and/or substances for the purpose of energy recovery. Energy recovery is the last option in the Oregon State law hierarchy of waste recovery.

Integrated Waste Management Plan – A municipal plan with specified waste reduction goals and integrating multiple controls, including source reduction, recycled-content products, post-consumer recycling, composting, land and water management, commerce networks, and tracking of waste generation and disposal through assessment of the waste stream and recycling potential of an individual business, industry, institution, or household.

Intention-behavior gap – A psychological term for the gap between the possession of knowledge, values and awareness, and behavior.

Intersectionality – the idea that multiple identities intersect to create a whole that is different from the component dentities. The theory that individuals think of each element or trait of a person as inextricably linked with all of the other elements in order to fully understand one's identity.

J/K/L

Junk mail – Third-class mail sent at a discount rate in large quantities, consisting of advertising and often addressed to resident or occupant, and referred to as direct mail or advertising mail by the mail and advertising industry. The EPA estimates that 44 percent of junk mail in the U.S. is discarded without being opened or read, equaling four million tons of waste paper per year, with only 32 percent recovered for recycling. Another assessment states that 250,000 homes could be heated using the equivalent energy required to produce a single day's worth of junk mail.

Landfill – A site for the final disposal of waste materials by burial.

Landfilling – The process of burying solid waste (or ashes that result from incineration) underground.

M

Manufactured Goods – Goods that have been produced by way of machinery, tools and labor.

Materials Management – The use of materials based on the environmental and social impacts associated with the materials across their entire life cycle. (EPA)

Materials Markets – Economic structure created through demand by private industry for materials used to manufacture products. Materials markets include both virgin and reclaimed materials.

Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) – Pronounced murf. A specialized plant that receives, separates, and prepares recyclable materials for end-user materials markets.

Metro – An elected regional government serving Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties and the 25 cities in the Portland region. Metro provides region-wide planning and coordination to manage pressing growth, infrastructure, and development issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Mulch – Covering for soil for the purpose of retaining moisture and reducing weeds. Mulch should not generally be mixed into the soil; it is not a fertilizer or soil amendment.

Multifamily Housing – Residential buildings with five or more units. Rented units such as apartments or owner-occupied units such as condos can both fall under this category.

N/O

Norm – 1: an authoritative standard. 2: a principle of right action binding the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate proper and acceptable behavior

Organic Material – Matter that has come from a once-living organism, is capable of decay or the product of decay, or is composed of organic compounds.

Organic Waste – Biodegradable waste, typically originating from plant or animal sources, which may be broken down by other living organisms. Some organic waste decomposes more easily then others.

P/Q

Paradigm Shift – An important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way.

Planned Obsolescence – The intentional production of a product that is planned or designed by the manufacturerto lose its value, become outdated, and/or cease to work after an expected period of time or use in order to increase profits.

Plastic Film – A thin sheet of material, usually plastic and usually transparent, used to wrap or cover things or make bags.

Pollution – The introduction of contaminants into an environment that causes instability, disorder, harm or discomfort to the ecosystem.

Precautionary Principle – The principle that the introduction of a new product or process whose ultimate effects are disputed or unknown should be resisted until scientific consensus is established that it is not harmful.

Precycling – A way of reducing waste through reduction and reuse which includes the consumer taking into consideration the impact of the consumption of goods on the environment.

Product Stewardship – Where everyone involved in the lifespan of a product is called upon to take up responsibility to reduce its environmental, health, and safety impacts. Often the manufacturing of products does not require that they include these costs to society and the burden is placed on consumers and government. Product Stewardship laws add the responsibility to manufacturers as well.

R

Recovery – The extraction of discarded materials for reuse, recycling, composting or energy generation in order to capture some of the energy and natural resources used to make products and replace the consumption of virgin resources to make new products.

Recycle – The action of processing used materials into new products so as to conserve natural resources and energy, curb air and water pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Reduce – The practice of minimizing consumption of natural resources and energy and generation of waste through careful consideration before production or purchase of a good or service.

Repurpose – The use of something for a purpose other than its original one.

Reuse – The practice of reusing something exactly as it was meant to be used without having to process it like we do for recycling. Reuse can also be about thinking differently about the objects around us and seeing if they can meet new needs.

S

Salvage – The act of rescuing materials for reuse in the original form or the resulting material.

Sanitary Landfill – A landfill where waste is isolated from the surrounding environment.

Sharing or Access Economy – A business model in which individuals are able to borrow or rent assets owned by someone else usually through a technology platform.

Social Marketing – Theory and practice that seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with behavior science that benefits individuals and communities for the greater social good.

Solid waste – Any discarded (abandoned or considered waste-like) materials. Solid wastes can be solid, liquid, semi-solid or containerized gaseous material.

Source Reduction – See Reduction.

Source Separation – The segregation of recyclables at the point of generation (home, work) and before collection.

Sustainability – To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Consumption – The use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.

T/U/V/W/X/Y/Z

Transfer Station – A local preparation site that temporarily accepts trash, toxic materials, compostables and/or recyclables from residents, businesses and commercial waste haulers. Materials are usually then combined and compacted for transportation to landfills, compost facilities or markets at further distances.

Upstream (Impacts) – The environmental effects of the production, packaging, and transportation of goods and services. Upstream impacts contrast with the use phase and disposal or waste recovery phase (or Downstream Impacts).

Vermiculture – The use of redworms to break down organic materials such as food scraps, newspapers, and cardboard, yielding nutrient-rich castings for fertilization.

Virgin Source Materials – New raw materials that are extracted, mined, refined, and used to produce goods. The purpose of reusing and recycling is to replace the need for virgin source materials. Waste prevention avoids the need for the virgin source and recycled/reused material.

Waste – See also Solid Waste. Unwanted or undesired material. A material that has outlasted its purpose or is left over. The trait of using resources carelessly, imprudently, or without thrift.

Waste Generation– The act of consuming goods and services that result in undesired material. The resulting waste is usually expressed in weight, generated by a specific area or entity over a course of time that must be processed through reuse, recycling, composting, incineration or landfilling. The only part of the waste hierarchy that is not part of waste generation is waste prevention (Reduce).

Waste Management – The processes of the collection, treatment and disposal or return to markets of materials after their use phase. Proper waste management reduces the negative impacts waste has on environment and society.

Waste Prevention – See Reduce.

Waste Shed – An area where waste is generated and then collected together for processing or recovery.

Waste Stream – The total flow of solid waste generated from homes, businesses, institutions, and manufacturing plants that is recycled, burned, or disposed of in landfills, or segments thereof such as the residential waste stream or the recyclable waste stream.