Upcycling: Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Is Metro looking only for waste streams that are turned into products that are purchased back by Metro? (like the Banner to Bags Program)?**
   a. That is not a requirement of this effort.

2. **Are the items presented in the Forum the only items Metro is looking to upcycle?**
   a. No. We only had time to highlight some of the items we thought might be suitable for this effort. However, we are open to any ideas that make use of materials in Metro’s waste stream.

3. **Do the products need to be manufactured in LA County?**
   a. Not necessarily. We would like to support the local economy and the manufacturing and craft space in LA County, but we are open to all ideas.

4. **Do materials need to be reused locally?**
   a. No, materials do not need to be used locally. However, we are trying to minimize negative impacts on the environment and the transport of materials creates greenhouse gas emissions.

5. **Is the main purpose of the program to divert waste or save money?**
   a. This project aims to divert waste from landfill, which saves Metro disposal costs and reduce the negative health impacts and the greenhouse gas emissions that go with transporting that waste. We are hopeful that we will be able to accomplish many goals with this effort.

6. **What if reducing waste is more costly than disposal?**
   a. Cost is a factor, but we are reviewing opportunities through a triple-bottom line analysis that also takes into consideration the environmental and social impacts of what we do with the material. While we’re trying to make the business case for this pilot project, it is not the sole consideration on whether or not we move forward with an idea.
7. Please send out this recording
   a. The link to the recording is here.

8. What methods does Metro use to track waste from various departments?
   a. Our waste characterization studies have really helped us understand the full life cycle of our waste streams - what is being produced, how we can reduce waste being produced and how we can potentially reuse that material. We receive data on quantity of waste in monthly or annual tonnage reports depending on the item and the processes used by the current vendor.

9. Can you forecast the amount of some of these materials?
   a. We currently track the amount of material produced as part of our waste characterization studies and through reports from our waste vendors. We also track quantities of materials used through Operations and our vendor and contract management team that oversees inventory, goods and products that we order regularly based on what we have in storage. A more detailed tracking system could potentially be explored if needed, should a worthwhile proposal that requires that information be pursued.

10. How did Metro decide on upcycling as a priority?
    a. Upcycling is an opportunity. It is one of many strategies we are pursuing to reduce waste generation and divert waste from landfill. We are looking at upcycling based on the success of our Banner to Bags program. When people started asking what other materials we have that could be upcycled, we saw this as an opportunity to learn what the industry can offer to us in terms of ideas.

    b. As part of looking at the lifecycle of our materials, we’re evaluating many alternatives. In the process of trying to see if there was a better material for our vinyl banners and our bus wraps, we found the ability to do something different with the end material and created the Banner to Bags program.

11. Does Metro reuse plastic fencing and visual screens from one construction site to another?
    a. Projects done in-house have the opportunity for reuse, but many Metro projects are completed by various outside contractors. Depending on the contract, some materials are reused through Metro and some belong to the contractor. We have strict criteria for our construction contractors, requiring 75% or more waste diversion.

12. Will the materials be supplied at no cost and are they delivered or held for pickup?
    a. This is not predetermined. At this stage, we are looking for what is possible and how to quantify potential cost savings. Should an idea move into a procurement, such details would be part of that process.

13. Will Metro accept submissions from participants or firms that did not attend the web forum?
a. Absolutely. If you have colleagues or partners that were unable to join us today, please direct them to our web page: metro.net/upcycling. Resources, including a recording of this web cast and guidelines on how to submit upcycling ideas are posted.

b. Ideas can come from anyone. This isn’t a procurement. We are looking for viable opportunities that can support our waste diversion goals.

14. Do companies need to be in the city or county of LA to become certified with the DEOD small business program?

   a. No, you don’t have to be in the city or county to become certified with Metro. Visit metro.net/connect and select “How to get certified.”

15. What size is considered a small business?

   a. A small business has an annual gross revenue under $1.32M

16. Is this opportunity restricted to small businesses?

   a. No.