

# Proposed Budget - Department Overview

## FY 2025-26



Parks and Nature, March 2025

---

### Summary of Department Budget for FY26 Proposed Budget

Parks and Nature protects water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and connects people to nature through a connected system of parks, trails and natural areas. With over 19,000 acres, the department manages parks and natural areas across every community in the region. Thanks to two decades of voter investments, along with managing more than 11,000 acres of natural areas, Metro has built and operates 17 parks, manages 14 cemeteries and offers three boat ramps.

The work of the Parks and Nature Department is organized into five major program areas: Protect and Conserve Nature; Create and Maintain Great Places; Connect People to Nature; Support Community Aspirations; and Convene, Plan and Build a Regional Trail System. The primary funding sources are the voter approved general obligation bond and local-option levy. Additional sources are transfers from the Metro general fund, fees for service, and grants.

A few accomplishments in FY25 to highlight include:

- Bond investments: Take Care of Metro Parks {spent over \$2.6 million at Blue Lake Park to update the maintenance building and build a new park office; Protect and Restore Land {680+ acres, include 553 from Eagle Creek Golf Course; Large Scale Community Visions: \$10M grant award to Kellog Creek Dam project.
- Levy investments: habitat restoration {5,000 acres estimated}, park visitation {600,000 estimated}, Nature in Neighborhood grants {\$750k awarded to 9 grantees with more than 50 project partners}; provided nature education and stewardship programming to hundreds of children and adults.
- Other: recipient of international award for Nature in Neighborhoods community choice grant program; significant planning and design milestones on Willamette Cove cleanup and master plan development; more the 4,300 life jackets distributed to community members over the summer to raise water safety awareness and reduce drownings.

The FY26 proposed budget reflects a total budget of \$115 million and includes \$78 million in the bond fund and \$35 million in the operating fund. The new department FTE after reductions is 122.9.

### Ongoing Department Growth and/or Reductions included in FY26 Proposed Budget

Thanks to the bond, the Parks and Nature department's portfolio of natural areas and parks to manage continues to grow. However, this budget recognizes operations and maintenance resources are not escalating at the rate of expenditures causing a structural deficit that needs to be addressed through a period of consolidation and contraction. This requires a significant reorganization, reduction in our workforce and reduction in the materials and services budget in the Parks and Nature Operating Fund to align expenditures with projected resources over the next three years. The FY26 proposed budget presents a net reduction of 19.8 full-time positions across the operating and bond funds compared to FY 2024-25.

# Proposed Budget - Department Overview

## FY 2025-26



Parks and Nature, March 2025

---

### Highlighted Significant Changes from FY25 Budget

The year over year change due to operating fund budget reductions in total dollars is \$2.6 million, 19.8 FTE, and \$1.5 million in materials and services. Service levels will be impacted in our parks, natural areas and cemeteries. We will remain committed to our equity and justice outcomes while focusing on staff/visitor safety and well-being and fulfilling our promises of the voter approved bond and levy.

Some of the budget implications will not be noticeable immediately. Reductions could mean longer times between staff interactions with visitors and park facilities. We will prioritize safety inspections and health related tasks, which may leave some routine landscape and facility maintenance unattended for longer time periods. Programming and maintenance activities that have relied on contracted services will be reduced or eliminated to prioritize staff time or as part of limited budget dollars.

Department organization will change to respond to staff reductions, it will take time to fully implement and evaluate these work shifts. Triage of work tasks will mean longer intervals on maintenance items in the land management and developed facilities. This may result in temporary closures or deferred maintenance items while higher priority items resolved. The fee schedule for all Parks and Nature services will be reviewed to determine if additional revenue can be generated while still providing equitable and affordable access to the program, facilities, and nature experiences.

We will continue our commitment in FY26 on meeting 2019 bond measure outcomes and the implementation of work plans funded by the 2022 Parks and Natural Areas levy renewal.

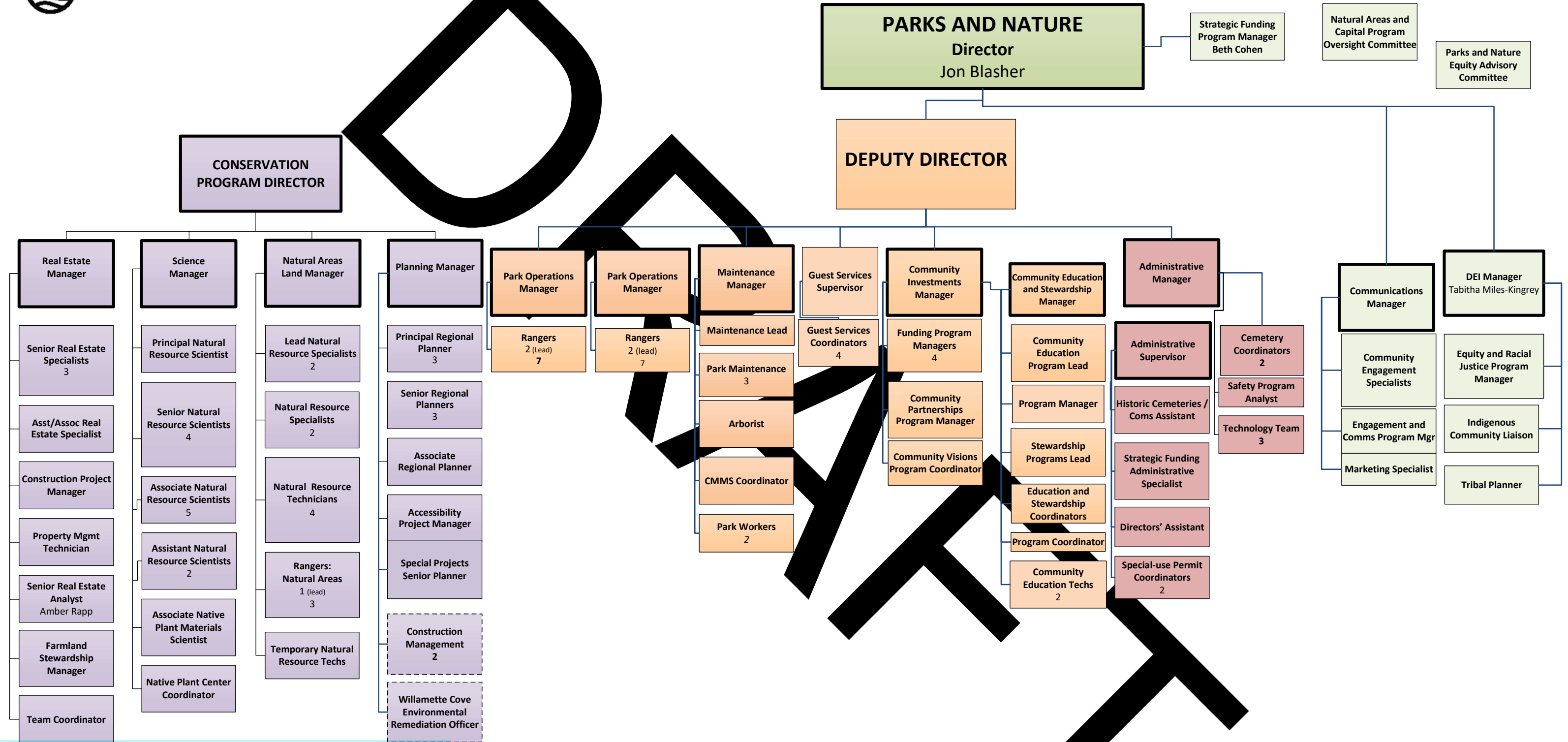
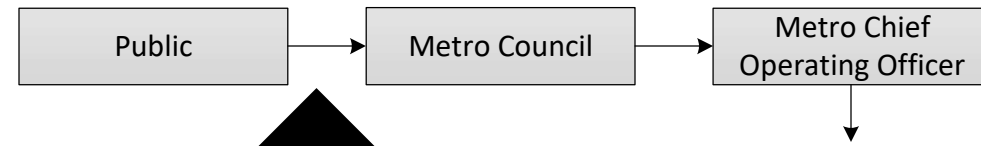
### Any Other Overall Impacts that Require Council Direction and/or Attention

Current budget and organizational life cycle of contraction and consolidation will have impacts to services and generate questions, comments and concerns from staff, the public and partners in the next year. Council and management will need to be prepared to answer those questions, reflect on the comments, and provide some assurances and trust-building in addressing concerns.

Looking out 2-3 years, Council will need to consider and dictate the department's longer-term sustainability. Will the department continue to consolidate and contract, remain flat or return to a growth cycle. All of this will depend on the department's role in the region, levels of desired service, and funding resources to meet those expectations. Council will need to consider referring an operations and maintenance funding measure before the current local-option levy expires on June 30, 2028.

### Attachments:

Org Chart



This document is for Council budget planning, subject to change based on final Metro Council adoption.

