

## **STAFF REPORT FOR COUNCIL MEETING**

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 25-5470, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING 2019 PARKS AND NATURE BOND FUNDS TO OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY TO ACQUIRE PROPERTY IN THE MULTNOMAH CHANNEL HEADWATERS TARGET AREA

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Date: March 3, 2025

Department: Parks and nature

Meeting Date: March 20, 2025

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she/her

Presenter: N/A

Length: Consent

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### **ISSUE STATEMENT**

The Metro Council structured the 2019 parks and nature bond to allow partnerships with public entities and community organizations to maximize investment in priority parks, trails and natural areas across the region that meet bond requirements and criteria. To facilitate efficient implementation, the bond measure outlines Council policy direction to guide staff work and identifies when staff will seek Council review and direction on decisions, awards and investments.

Metro now has the opportunity to distribute \$3.5 million in funding via an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to Oregon State University (OSU), in partnership with Trust for Public Land, to purchase a 3,111-acre parcel in the Tualatin Mountain Forest, within Metro's Multnomah Channel Headwaters Target Area. Council approval of Resolution No. 25-5470 will formalize the IGA, optimize resource allocation and ensure the successful implementation of the Tualatin Mountain Forest Project.

Approval of Resolution No. 25-5470 will strategically allocate 2019 parks and nature bond funds through a partnership-based acquisition, advance shared conservation and research objectives with OSU, support long-term regional goals for habitat connectivity and water quality protection in the Tualatin Mountain area and maintain Metro staff capacity for other critical acquisition projects.

### **ACTION REQUESTED**

Council consideration and approval of Resolution 25-5470.

### **IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

The proposed IGA with OSU aligns with Metro's protect and restore land program and supports Refinement Plan goals for the Multnomah Channel Headwaters Target Area. While the project was initially designated as a large scale community visions project in spring 2023, the funding source has been updated to align with Council direction to explore relevant funding sources to better align with program criteria and to maintain the \$10 million funding cycle limit for the large scale community visions program.

Metro parks and nature and OSU identified that public acquisition of the property provides valuable natural riparian and upland wildlife habitat and water quality protection and that as a condition to funding these, characteristics of the acquisition area

will be conserved, protected, and enhanced through land management commitments described in the intergovernmental agreement. If Council approves Resolution 25-5470, it will leverage bond investments through partnerships and ensure OSU will assume responsibility for management, operating expenditures and ongoing liability.

### **POLICY QUESTION**

Should the Metro Council approve Resolution 25-5470 to execute an IGA with OSU for the purchase of the 3,111-acre Tualatin Mountain Forest parcel, reallocating funding to align with the protect and restore Land Program criteria and Multnomah Channel Headwaters Target Area goals?

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends the Metro Council approve Resolution 25-5470.

### **STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

The 2019 parks and nature bond measure, approved by voters, allocated \$475 million for regional investment in parks, trails, and natural areas. The Metro Council's resolutions establish policy direction for property acquisition aligned with Target Area Refinement Plans goals.

The Tualatin Mountain Forest Project aligns strongly with protect and restore land program criteria, and funding it through this source supports both Council and COO direction from 2023, while offering significant public benefits. The Tualatin Mountain Forest Project doesn't impact parks and nature's work to maximize bond funds for acquisition of priority habitat across the region to advance goals set by Metro Council, conservation and community partners. To date, protect and restore has acquired two properties in this target area totaling just under \$2 million. This purchase will increase spending in this target area to just under \$5.5 million, or about seven percent of overall dollars available for acquisition across 24 Council adopted target areas.

### **Climate Action Goals**

Oregon State University intends to develop the property as a research, education, and demonstration forest focused on restoring habitat, promoting biodiversity, and enhancing climate resilience through carbon sequestration, oak and hardwood species promotion, stream restoration, and wildlife habitat creation. The Tualatin Mountain Forest Project aligns with Metro's protect and restore land program and Refinement Plan goals for the Multnomah Channel Headwaters Target Area, including improving biotic connectivity across Highway 30 and the Portland and Western Railroad, restoring Tualatin Mountains headwater forests, and enhancing water quality and wildlife habitat. The property will be actively managed as a research forest that balances ecological and economic objectives.

### **Legal Antecedents**

- Resolution No. 24-5389, For the Purpose of Updating the Natural Areas Work Plan to Fund Real Property Purchases by Public Partners through the Bond Acquisition Programs of the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure (March 7, 2024)
- Resolution No. 22-5250, For the Purpose of Approving Acquisition Target Area

Refinement Plans for the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure (April 14, 2022)

- Resolution No. 19-4988, For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area General Obligations Bonds in the Amount of \$475 Million to Fund Natural Area and Water Quality Protection and to Connect People to Nature Closeto Home; and Setting Forth the Official Intent of the Metro Council to Reimburse Certain Expenditures Out of the Proceeds of Said Bonds Upon Issuance (June 6, 2019)

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2022, Metro Council initiated a \$10 million pilot round of the large scale community visions program to fund projects meeting specific bond and program criteria designed to uplift communities through multi-benefit habitat restoration projects that also include including job opportunities, affordable housing, or transportation. This project was initially identified as a large scale community visions project in the pilot round of the program in spring 2023, However, following Council direction to maximize program impact, the Chief Operating Officer recommended exploring alternative funding sources across the parks and nature bond parks and nature staff determined that the project better aligned with protect and restore land funding criteria.