

Council meeting agenda

Tuesday, July 21, 2026

10:00 AM Concord Community Center, 3811 SE Concord Rd, Oak Grove, OR 97267.

**<https://zoom.us/j/615079992> (Webinar ID: 615079992) or 253-205-0468 (toll free),
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eEIIWnTfg4>**

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Please contact legislativecoordinator@oregonmetro.gov or call (503) 81-7591 with your name and the topic you'd like to comment on to sign up in advance or for assistance.

Please note: public comments on non-agenda will next be accepted at the Council meeting on July 23, 2026.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Introduction and Grants Overview

3. Resolutions

- 2.1 Resolution No. 26-5579 For the Purpose of Approving [RES 26-5579](#)
Funding for Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants

Presenter(s): Jon Blasher, Parks and Nature Director
Crista Gardner, Capital Grants Program Manager

Attachments: [Resolution No. 26-5579](#)
[Exhibit A](#)
[Staff Report](#)

- 2.2 Resolution No. 26-5581 For the Purpose of Approving Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants [RES 26-5581](#)
- Presenter(s): Jon Blasher, Parks and Nature Director
Crista Gardner, Capital Grants Program Manager
Gabrielle Brown, Capital Grants Program Manager
- Attachments: [Resolution No. 26-5581](#)
[Exhibit A](#)
[Staff Report](#)
- 2.3 Resolution No. 26-5625 For the Purpose of Approving Funding for Protect and Restore Land Community-Led Acquisition Grants [RES 26-5625](#)
- Presenter(s): Jon Blasher, Parks and Nature Director
Crista Gardner, Capital Grants Program Manager
Gabrielle Brown, Capital Grants Program Manager
- Attachments: [Resolution No. 26-5625](#)
[Exhibit A](#)
[Staff Report](#)
- 2.4 Resolution No. 26-5580 For the Purpose of Approving 2026-26 Nature in Neighborhoods Community Stewardship Community Stewardship and Restoration Community Grants [RES 26-5580](#)
- Presenter(s): Jon Blasher (he/him), Parks and Nature Director
Karissa Lowe, Community Grants Program Manager
- Attachments: [Resolution No. 26-5580](#)
[Exhibit A to Resolution No. 26-5580](#)
[Staff Report](#)
- 2.5 Resolution 26-5578 For the Purpose of Approving a Third Round of Funding for Parks and Nature Bond Large Scale Community Visions Program **RES 26-5578**
- Presenter(s): Jon Blasher (he/him), Parks and Nature Director
Linda Bartolini Venegas (she/her), Large Scale Community Visions Program Manager
- Materials expected July 20.*

4. Chief Operating Officer Communication

5. Councilor Communication

6. Adjourn

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Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
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Agenda #: 2.1

File #: RES 26-5579

Agenda Date: 7/21/2026

**Resolution No. 26-5579 For the Purpose of Approving Funding for Nature in Neighborhoods
Capital Grants**

Jon Blasher, Parks and Nature Director
Crista Gardner, Capital Grants Program Manager

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING FUNDING	)	RESOLUTION NO. 26-5579
FOR NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS CAPITAL	)	
GRANTS	)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
	)	Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with
	)	Council President Juan Carlos González

WHEREAS, in June 2019, the Metro Council referred to the Metro area voters a ballot measure, Resolution No. 19-4988, authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$475,000,000.00 for the purpose of funding natural area and water quality protection and to connect people to nature close to home (the Bond Measure); and

WHEREAS, at the general election held on November 5, 2019, the Metro Area voters approved the Bond Measure, creating a Nature in Neighborhood capital grants program (the Program) to fund community-led projects that benefit people and nature, with an emphasis on historically marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, the Program requires Metro to establish a Capital Grants Review Committee (the Committee) to review all projects and make recommendations to the Metro Council and also requires the Metro Council to make all grant awards; and

WHEREAS, the Committee has reviewed and evaluated the Program grant applications and recommends to the Metro Council for award the eight projects listed in Exhibit A; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council

1. Awards Program grant funds for the eight projects listed in Exhibit A; and
2. Directs the Chief Operating Officer to execute all contracts necessary to implement the grant awards.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 21st day of July 2026.

Juan Carlos González, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Program
Fourth Round Grant Awards
Grant Review Committee Recommendations to the Metro Council

Total award amount recommended: \$ 9,889,331

Application Title: Evergreen Park Nature Play

Organization Name: City of Hillsboro

Requested Amount: \$116,000

Project Summary: The project proposes to develop an accessible “off-trail” nature play area at Evergreen Park. The proposed "off-trail" nature play area will be approximately 10,000 square feet in size. It will feature natural fallen trees, exposed root wads, snags, native vegetation, access to water through a water table (play equipment), native soil, sand, rocks, and logs, creating a nature-based experience with plenty of room to explore, yet with well-defined boundaries.

Application Title: Milwaukie Bay Park Nature Enhancements

Organization Name: City of Milwaukie

Requested Amount: \$1,775,000

Project Summary: Milwaukie Bay Park will provide important enhancements for cooling and naturally improved water quality. Amenities include a natural amphitheater, nature-based play area, splash pad, and increased tree canopy; all in a diverse, walkable neighborhood.

Application Title: Clackamette Park Restoration

Organization Name: City of Oregon City

Requested Amount: \$1,538,480

Project Summary: Oregon City seeks funding to transform 2.26 acres of underutilized parkland at Clackamette Park into resilient natural space with improved river access. This project will remove and replace the existing RV Park with open lawn space, river access, pathways, and native plantings.

Application Title: Helen Althaus Park and Trail Restoration

Organization Name: City of Troutdale

Requested Amount: \$212,294

Project Summary: Rehabilitate Helen Althaus Park, improve access, reduce the buildup of wood debris and ground fuels, improve the health of a beautiful stand of mature Western Red Cedars. The project will mitigate the spread of invasive plants and replant natives that promote bird and insect biodiversity.

Application Title: Tualatin Riverfront Park and Trail

Organization Name: City of Tualatin

Requested Amount: \$2,000,000

Project Summary: The Downtown Tualatin Riverfront Park project restores six acres along the Tualatin River, removing invasive species, replanting native vegetation, and enhancing wildlife habitat. It provides inclusive river access, walking and biking connections, and educational opportunities, creating a resilient, nature-rich space that benefits the community.

Application Title: Marquam Nature Park Restoration

Organization Name: Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation

Property owner: City of Portland

Requested Amount: \$250,000

Project Summary: The Marquam Habitat and Access Infrastructure Project will restore and enhance 20 acres within Marquam Nature Park, a 200-acre urban natural area with extensive trails and heavy public use. Years of informal trail creation and high visitor traffic have fragmented habitat, eroded soils, and degraded forest understory and riparian zones, impacting wildlife movement and contributing sediment to headwater streams. This project will close unsustainable trails, stabilize soils, and replant native, climate-resilient vegetation to improve habitat quality and connectivity. A limited number of new or realigned trails will provide safe, sustainable access while concentrating use along engineered routes designed to reduce ecological impacts. Permanent drainage and erosion-control features, along with interpretive infrastructure, will further protect natural resources and enhance visitor understanding of the park's ecological and cultural significance.

Application Title: Kelly Creek Dam Removal and Restoration

Organization Name: Mt. Hood Community College

Requested Amount: \$1,997,557

Project Summary: Kelly Creek Dam Removal and Restoration in Gresham, OR, is a cornerstone project that will leverage and amplify decades of investment in the Sandy River watershed by restoring habitat, increasing climate resilience, and reconnecting people with a stream forgotten since 1968.

Application Title: World Forestry Center Plaza

Organization Name: World Forestry Center

Property owner: City of Portland

Requested Amount: \$2,000,000

Project Summary: World Forestry Center (WFC) seeks support from the Metro Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grant program to renovate its campus into a welcoming, year-round community space that strengthens access to nature and connection across Washington Park. The project will replace extensive hardscape in the central plaza with native and culturally significant landscaping, incorporate flexible gathering areas, art, and interpretive features that integrate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge and regional ecology. The project also includes wayfinding and restored trail connections that link the WFC campus directly to the Marquam Trail and surrounding park systems.

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 26-5579, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING FOURTH ROUND FUNDING FOR NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS CAPITAL GRANTS

Date: June 24, 2026

Department: Parks and Nature

Meeting: July 21, 2026

Prepared by: Crista Gardner, Elizabeth Guzman Arroyo

Presenters: Jon Blasher, Crista Gardner

ISSUE STATEMENT

Since 1995, voters in greater Portland have passed three bond measures that protect the region's air and water, restore fish and wildlife habitat, and connect people with nature. In November 2019, voters in greater Portland overwhelmingly approved a \$475 million parks and nature bond which included three critical aspects to this work: racial equity, community engagement and climate resilience.

The bond's Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program is designed to support community driven projects that protect and improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, support climate resiliency and/or increase people's experience of nature at the community scale and to fund community-led projects, with an emphasis on benefitting historically marginalized communities.

Metro received many strong proposals for the fourth solicitation this spring and is presenting for Council consideration and approval a slate of funding awards recommended by the grant review committee. Recommendations are based on the information submitted, the stated evaluation criteria, and the review committee's professional and collective judgment. Feedback and lessons learned from this fourth round will help shape and adjust future funding rounds.

ACTION REQUESTED

Council consideration and approval of Resolution No. 26-5579

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

By approving this fourth round of capital grants funding, Metro Council advances the intended purpose, principles, and criteria of the 2019 PN Bond resolution. Nature in Neighborhoods provides grants to projects led by community organizations, park providers, local governments, and others.

Metro Council direction has shaped the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program to help deliver investment to protect and improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, support climate resiliency and/or increase people's experience of nature at the community scale.

The recommended projects from the grant program must meet bond legal requirements to result in a publicly owned capital asset and address bond criteria and program goals as is stated in the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Handbook.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Does Council support and approve the grant committee's recommendation for funding awards?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Approval of Resolution No. 26-5579 to advance the grant committee's recommendation to award funding to 8 proposed projects for \$9,889,331. Council could also choose to award funds to some or none of the recommended projects.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that Metro Council accept the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants review committee recommendation to the Metro Council for the following eight (8) grant awards in Exhibit A.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

HOW IS THIS RELATED TO METRO'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OR CORE MISSION?

Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Program background

The roots of Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program can be found in the Regional Framework Plan which unites all of Metro's adopted land use planning policies and requirements including the 2040 Growth Concept and is designed to create sustainable and prosperous communities for present and future generations.

Metro Council adopted Ordinance 05-1077B (a.k.a. Nature in Neighborhoods) in September 2005. The ordinance established standards for development in streamside and wetland areas to conserve and protect fish and wildlife habitat and included Title 13 of Metro's Urban Growth Management Functional Plan, which implements Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 5 (natural resources, scenic and historic areas and open spaces) and Goal 6 (air, water and land resources quality).

In 2006, Metro Council approved and directed staff to develop the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program by submitting to voters the Bond of \$227.4M to fund natural area acquisition and water quality protection in Resolution No. 06-3672B.

In 2019, Metro Council approved and directed staff to refine the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program by submitting to voters the Parks and Nature Bond of \$475M to fund nature area and water quality protection and connect people to nature close to home in Resolution No. 19-4988. Metro Council approved new criteria in the PN Bond: racial equity, community engagement and climate resilience.

HOW DOES THIS ADVANCE METRO'S RACIAL EQUITY GOALS?

The Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program advances Metro's racial equity goals set by 2019 PN Bond criteria around meaningful community engagement and racial equity and program specific criteria.

During solicitation for this fourth round, parks and nature staff intentionally broadened outreach time and effort about this opportunity through social media, online, email listservs, parks director meetings, conservation and community non-profits, school districts, affordable housing providers, tourism, economic development, planning and development, and transportation organizations. Staff continued bringing community organizations into grant review committees to learn more about grant opportunities that could be relevant for their own organizations. In addition, staff directly reached out to organizations with potential projects identified in other Metro funding programs from Parks and Nature like Nature in Neighborhoods community choice grants and restoration grants, Large Scale Community Visions, Local Share, and from Planning and Development like Transit Oriented Development, Housing, Regional Flexible Funds Allocation Community Placemaking, and 2040 Planning Grants.

Staff continues to strengthen the connection between the Parks and Nature levy funded programs and bond funded projects and other Metro or externally funded programs and projects through this outreach and relationship building, monthly or quarterly coordination meetings across internal and external grantmaking programs, and capacity building with community, non-profits, and local governments.

In addition, Metro continued to offer more flexible match requirements to reduce barriers for jurisdictions and organizations to apply. Parks and Nature staff continued to reduce match from the 2023 grant requirement of 2:1 of 2006 Bond grants (66% match: 33% Metro) to the 2026 grant requirement of 1:2 commensurate with PN grants (33% match: 66% Metro).

The resulting portfolio of projects reflect that outreach. Projects span the three-county area within Metro's jurisdictional boundary. The primary applicants cross many sectors, including community organizations, park providers and public agencies. Projects range from de-paving key tourist destinations to removing fish barriers to restoring a community forest to building nature connections through trails, nature play, and enhanced parks.

HOW DOES THIS ADVANCE METRO'S CLIMATE ACTION GOALS?

The Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program advances Metro's climate action goals through implementation of the 2019 PN Bond and program criteria around climate resilience. The resulting project applications and recommended funding awards demonstrated a focus on watershed health, restoration of natural areas and connecting people to parks and nature fulfills climate resiliency in a broad way.

KNOWN OPPOSITION/SUPPORT/COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Since 2006, the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants has played an essential role in meeting the needs of the community and organizations connecting people to nature in the region, with an emphasis on benefitting historically marginalized communities and helping to embody the agency's goals on racial equity to ensure all communities in the Metro region benefit from these investments. The program has been well-loved and supported by community members and local partners. Through successive grant cycles, the program has evolved and adapted to reflect Metro Council direction and meet the needs of the community and organizations.

In addition, the bond also included a Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants pilot (now called community choice grants) that was designed by community members and Metro Council awarded grants through a participatory process in 2024 in modified Metro Council District 4 (Washington County) and is scheduled to award the second round in 2026 in Metro Council District 2 (Clackamas County) during the same Metro Council meeting on July 21, 2026. This community-led effort provided meaningful community engagement and partnership development that further the support for both programs. The two programs work in tandem to solicit ideas and projects from the community that meet the goals of the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program.

EXPLICIT LIST OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT.

The Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program and second solicitation round has been shaped at each step by community members and partner organizations. The program's focus and description in the 2019 parks and nature bond measure explicitly reflects the feedback received during the bond development process in 2018 and 2019 through focused stakeholder discussions and community forums. In addition, feedback collected during the refinement of other bond programs in 2021 and 2022 have also helped shape the solicitation handbook, review committee composition, and focus for this round.

As outlined in the parks and nature bond measure, with support from Metro staff, the Review Committee comes from a wide variety of backgrounds and experience on best practices related to racial equity, community engagement, and climate resilience and water quality, habitat restoration and traditional ecological knowledge to create the greatest benefits for people, plants and wildlife. Committee members are committed to Metro's parks and nature mission and to supporting all communities including, opportunities for historically marginalized groups, to design and build access to nature for their communities.

In Winter 2026, the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Review Committee, staffed by Metro, was established to review all projects and make funding recommendations to the Metro Council. The application process has two stages: a pre-application phase and a full application phase.

The review committee met first on February 27, 2026, attended site visits on May 1 and May 8, 2026, and met again on May 15, 2026 to create a recommendation for Metro Council. The review committee selected the best and most compelling proposals based on the information submitted, the stated evaluation criteria, and the review committee's professional and collective judgment. Committee members declared any direct conflict of interest in the proposals and did not score or participate directly in the discussion or ranking of an application where they had a conflict.

The review committee included community members with backgrounds in grant review, water quality and habitat restoration, landscape architecture, real estate, community development, job training programs, climate adaptation and resilience policies and practices, and sustainable development techniques.

Review committee members include: Jasper Lieber, Volunteer of Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Friends of Mt. Tabor, Portland Fruit Tree Project, Trail Keepers of Oregon, and Friends of

Trees; John Hoffnagle, Retired, Former Oregon State Parks Foundation; John Paul Van Nevel, ERM Scientist, Former US Forest Service; Katie Ryan, Wetlands Conservancy; Lynn Lindgren, Housing Development Center, architect; Mark Sirois, Clackamas County Development Services; and Thomas Kissinger, Oregon City, Parks.

LEGAL ANTECEDENTS

Resolution No. 19-4988, “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area General Obligation Bonds in the amount of \$475 million to Fund Nature Area and Water Quality Protection and to Connect People to Nature Close to Home; and Setting Forth the Official Intent of the Metro Council to Reimburse Certain Expenditures Out of the Proceeds of Said Bonds upon Issuance” was adopted on June 6, 2019.

Resolution No. 06-3672B, “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area A General Obligation Bond Indebtedness in the Amount of \$227.4 Million to Fund Natural Area Acquisition and Water Quality Protection” was adopted March 9, 2006.

Resolution No. 05-3574A, “Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods” was adopted in 2005.

ANTICIPATED EFFECTS

Approval of Resolution No. 26-5579 allows staff to advance Council direction to award funding to all 8 proposed projects through successful executed funding agreements. Metro will enter into Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) with governmental agencies and grant agreements with non-governmental agencies.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (CURRENT YEAR AND ONGOING)

No new financial implications result from this resolution. Metro Council approved funding in the 2019 PN Bond for the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants program.

BACKGROUND

In summary, by soliciting this fourth round of grants, the Nature in Neighborhoods grants program implements Council policy direction and builds on years of grant solicitation and management expertise. The grant solicitation was built on a guidebook developed with a community committee. The Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants review committee received 13 qualifying pre applications, totaling \$17 M in funding requests and 9 full applications requesting \$11.8 M.

The Metro Council has received updates on this program and progress to date in the fourth round of solicitation through email updates and briefings as needed. Council consideration and feedback during this round will help staff adjust and shape future solicitation rounds.



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
oregonmetro.gov

Agenda #: 2.2

File #: RES 26-5581

Agenda Date: 7/21/2026

Resolution No. 26-5581 For the Purpose of Approving Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants

Jon Blasher, Parks and Nature Director
Crista Gardner, Capital Grants Program Manager
Gabrielle Brown, Capital Grants Program Manager

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING FUNDING	)	RESOLUTION NO. 26-5581
FOR NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS	)	
COMMUNITY CHOICE GRANTS	)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
	)	Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with
	)	Council President Juan Carlos Gonzalez

WHEREAS, in June 2019, the Metro Council referred to the Metro area voters a ballot measure, Resolution No. 19-4988, authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$475,000,000.00 for the purpose of funding natural area and water quality protection and to connect people to nature close to home (the Bond Measure); and

WHEREAS, at the general election held on November 5, 2019, the Metro Area voters approved the Bond Measure, creating a Nature in Neighborhood capital grants program (the Program) to fund community-led projects that benefit people and nature, with an emphasis on historically marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, the Bond Measure requires the Program to pilot a new “Participatory Grantmaking” approach within this program area, referred to as the Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants; and

WHEREAS, the Program requires Metro to establish a Capital Grants Review Committee (the Committee) to review all projects and make recommendations to the Metro Council and also requires the Metro Council to make all grant awards; and

WHEREAS, in spring 2022, Metro worked with a program design and review committee to build the framework of the Program, and the Grants Guidebook, which identifies the desired outcomes and eligibility requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Committee has reviewed and evaluated the Program projects based on the community and recommends to the Metro Council for award the 23 projects listed in Exhibit A: now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council

1. Awards Program grant funds for the 23 projects listed in Exhibit A; and
2. Directs the Chief Operating Officer to execute all contracts necessary to implement the grant awards.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 21st of July 2026.

Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants Program
Grant Review Committee Recommendations to the Metro Council

Total award amount recommended: **\$3 million**

Project: Access to Minthorn Wetlands

Grant Amount: \$166,666.67

Recipient: City of Milwaukie

Summary: This project will improve access to wetlands with new connections and signage highlighting the site's ecological value and cultural history.

Project: Accessible Nature Skate at 70th and Monroe

Grant Amount: \$163,000.00

Recipient: North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District

Summary: This project will support the creation of a new community park by supporting skatable elements integrated into a park setting with native plantings and green stormwater infrastructure.

Project: Accessible River Experience at Clackamette

Grant Amount: \$140,316.67

Recipient: City of Oregon City

Summary: This project will improve accessibility and create a scenic riverfront path with seating, art, and interpretive features at the river confluence.

Project: Adaptive River Access at Riverside Park

Grant Amount: \$160,333.33

Recipient: Clackamas River Water

Summary: This project will create an accessible river access point with improved habitat and paths for people of all abilities.

Project: Educational Pollinator Garden

Grant Amount: \$124,900.00

Recipient: City of Oregon City

Summary: This project will create a small habitat area with native plants and features to support pollinators and wildlife.

Project: Habitat Restoration at Spring Park

Grant Amount: \$70,900.00

Recipient: City of Milwaukie

Summary: This project will restore habitat by removing invasive species, planting native vegetation, and improving forest health and trail conditions.

Project: Inclusive Nature Play at Rivercrest

Grant Amount: \$153,599.67

Recipient: City of Oregon City

Summary: This project will enhance an inclusive play area with nature play features, accessible paths, and seating for families and caregivers.

Project: Inclusive Nature Play in Chapin

Grant Amount: \$135,666.67

Recipient: City of Oregon City

Summary: This project will enhance a playground with shade trees, rain gardens, and native plantings to support pollinators, manage stormwater, and create a more comfortable play environment.

Project: Indigenous Art at the Mouth of the Clackamas

Grant Amount: \$52,000.00

Recipient: City of Oregon City

Summary: This project will celebrate the cultural significance of the river confluence through art installations and interpretive signage.

Project: Meldrum Bar Restoration

Grant Amount: \$93,166.67

Recipient: City of Gladstone

Summary: This project will restore river habitat and add trails, seating, and interpretive signage to connect people with the river's ecology and cultural history.

Project: Milwaukie Neighborhood Swift Roost

Grant Amount: \$164,766.67

Recipient: City of Milwaukie

Summary: This project will preserve swift habitat by protecting a roosting chimney, adding native plantings, and supporting a cherished community wildlife experience.

Project: Natural Shade at Max Patterson Park

Grant Amount: \$95,866.67

Recipient: City of Gladstone

Summary: This project will add trees and nature-based shade structures to create a cooler and more comfortable park environment.

Project: Nature Skate at Water Tower Park

Grant Amount: \$160,433.33

Recipient: City of Milwaukie

Summary: This project will combine small-scale skate features with habitat restoration and stormwater improvements.

Project: Nature Play and Habitat at Clackamette

Grant Amount: \$157,116.67

Recipient: City of Oregon City

Summary: This project will add nature-based play features, including an interactive water play area and educational elements connected by accessible paths with native plantings.

Project: Neighborhood Greenspace in Sunnyside

Grant Amount: \$115,883.33

Recipient: North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District

Summary: This project will help create a new park by contributing native pollinator plantings, pocket forests, and rain gardens.

Project: Restore Furnberg Wetlands

Grant Amount: \$140,583.33

Recipient: City of Milwaukie

Summary: This project will support the creekside and floodplain forest at North Clackamas Park by mitigating the impacts of emerald ash borer on the Oregon ash woodlands.

Project: Risley Refresh

Grant Amount: \$165,800.00

Recipient: North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District

Summary: This project will create a nature-based play area with interactive features and native plantings to support play and wildlife observation.

Project: River Access at Milwaukie Bay Park

Grant Amount: \$166,400.00

Recipient: City of Milwaukie

Summary: This project will create a safe and accessible river entry point with a gathering space for enjoying the water.

Project: Shade for the Clackamas North Bank

Grant Amount: \$98,033.33

Recipient: City of Gladstone

Summary: This project will plant shade trees and native vegetation to improve habitat and comfort along the river.

Project: Shade for the Clackamas River Southbank

Grant Amount: \$101,366.67

Recipient: Clackamas Water Environmental Services

Summary: This project will plant trees, restore native vegetation, and improve trails along the river corridor.

Project: Stream and Garden Improvements at End of the Oregon Trail Park

Grant Amount: \$119,083.33

Recipient: City of Oregon City

Summary: This project will restore landscapes and gardens while adding interpretive features that connect ecology, history, and community use.

Project: Trail and Habitat Improvements at Rivervilla Park

Grant Amount: \$95,516.67

Recipient: North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District

Summary: This project will complete a short trail loop by extending existing walking trails, while restoring habitat by mitigating emerald ash borer impacts.

Project: Treat Stormwater above Kellogg Creek

Grant Amount: \$158,600.00

Recipient: City of Milwaukie

Summary: This project will improve stream health and fish habitat while creating educational opportunities through upgraded outfalls.

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 26-5581, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY CHOICE GRANTS

Date: June 22, 2026

Presenters: Jon Blasher, Crista Gardner,
Gabrielle Brown

Department: Parks and Nature

Meeting: July 21, 2026

Prepared by: Crista Gardner, Gabrielle Brown

ISSUE STATEMENT

Since 1995, voters in greater Portland have passed three bond measures that protect the region's air and water, restore fish and wildlife habitat, and connect people with nature. In November 2019, voters in greater Portland overwhelmingly approved a \$475 million parks and nature bond which included three critical aspects to this work: racial equity, community engagement and climate resilience. All six programs in the bond are launched and making investments in parks, trails and natural areas across the region.

The Park and Nature bond's capital grants program includes the Community Choice Grants pilot which is designed to support community driven projects that protect and improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, support climate resiliency and/or increase people's experience of nature at the community scale and to fund community-led projects, with an emphasis on benefitting historically marginalized communities.

Staff are presenting for Council consideration and approval a slate of funding awards recommended by the grant review committee based on the Council policy articulated in the bond measure, a community vote, applications submitted, the stated grants criteria, geographic distribution, and the review committee's professional and collective judgment. Feedback and lessons learned from this pilot will help shape and adjust any potential future funding rounds.

ACTION REQUESTED

Council consideration and approval of Resolution No. 26-5581

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

By approving this second round of Community Choice Grants funding, Metro Council advances the intended purpose, principles and criteria of the 2019 PN Bond resolution. Nature in Neighborhoods provides grants to projects led by community organizations, park providers, local governments, and others.

Metro Council direction has shaped the Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants program to help deliver investment to protect and improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, support climate resiliency and/or increase people's experience of nature at the community scale.

The recommended projects from the grant program must meet bond legal requirements to result in a publicly owned capital asset and address bond criteria and program goals as is stated in the Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants Guidebook.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Does Council support and approve the grant committee's recommendation for funding awards?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Approval of Resolution No. 26-5581 allows staff to advance Council direction to award funding to all 23 proposed projects through successful executed funding agreements. Council can accept the recommendations for funding; make alternate recommendations and funding decisions; or award no funding and direct staff to revise the process.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council consideration and approval of the second round of recommended slate of awards for the Community Choice Grants pilot marks the completion of a two-year community engagement and process with Clackamas County partners. Council consideration and feedback during the initial round from 2022 – 2024 helped staff to adjust and shape this round and future potential rounds.

Staff recommends that Metro Council accept the Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants review committee recommendation to the Metro Council for the following 23 grant awards in Exhibit A.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

HOW IS THIS RELATED TO METRO'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OR CORE MISSION?

Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Program background

Since 2006, the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants has played an essential role in meeting the needs of the community and organizations connecting people to nature in the region, with a focus on serving underserved communities and helping to embody the agency's goals on racial equity. The program has been well-loved and supported by community members and local partners. Through successive grant cycles, the program has evolved and adapted to reflect Metro Council direction and meet the needs of the community and organizations. As a part of the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program, the Community Choice Grants continue this tradition while expanding collaborative partnerships and community engagement.

The roots of Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program can be found in the Regional Framework Plan which unites all of Metro's adopted land use planning policies and requirements including the 2040 Growth Concept and is designed to create sustainable and prosperous communities for present and future generations.

Metro Council adopted Ordinance 05-1077B (Nature in Neighborhoods) in September 2005 to establish standards for development in streamside and wetland areas to conserve and protect fish and wildlife habitat and included Title 13 of Metro's Urban Growth Management Functional Plan,

which implements Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 5 (natural resources, scenic and historic areas and open spaces) and Goal 6 (air, water and land resources quality).

In 2006, Metro Council approved and directed staff to develop the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program by submitting to voters the Bond of \$227.4M to fund natural area acquisition and water quality protection in Resolution No. 06-3672B.

In 2019, Metro Council approved new criteria in the Parks and Nature Bond: racial equity, community engagement and climate resilience. Metro Council directed staff in the legislation to pilot a new “Participatory Grantmaking” approach within the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program area, referred to as the Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants. The Community Choice Grants build on Parks and Nature’s experience soliciting and awarding capital and community grants, support matchmaking between park providers and community organizations and supporting external grant review committees, and increase the community led aspect of all of these elements.

HOW DOES THIS ADVANCE METRO’S RACIAL EQUITY GOALS?

The Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants program advances Metro’s racial equity goals set by 2019 PN Bond criteria around meaningful community engagement and racial equity and program specific criteria at every step of the process from the formation of the program design and review committee to the ways projects were designed and prioritized

The Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants program and projects were designed by community members in 2022. The Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants Program Design and Review Committee members were selected through an open recruitment process. The committee’s composition and focus reflect the agency’s focus on advancing racial equity. Grant applicants were eligible to serve on the committee and stipends of \$200 per meeting were available for committee members upon request. Metro recruited for people with backgrounds in water quality and habitat restoration, landscape architecture, real estate, community development, workforce development, job training and apprenticeship programs, climate adaptation and resilience policies and practices, sustainable development techniques.

Community Engagement and Vote Process

Outreach for this grant opportunity was conducted through social media and online venues, direct mailings, email listservs, parks director meetings, local advisory board meetings, and a series of open public events and tabling opportunities at community venues. Outreach was conducted with the help of local parks providers, watershed and conservation organizations, local special districts, grant makers, and other Metro teams. The resulting portfolio of projects reflects that outreach. Applying lessons learned through the first round of Community Choice Grants in Washington County to the second round in Clackamas County increased engagement dramatically while reducing costs by leveraging existing community spaces and focusing on the most effective engagement methods.

In Spring 2025, Metro and its partners conducted extensive outreach via three community workshops, one accessibility workshop, various community events, social media, direct mailers, newsletters, and emails. By July 1, 2025, community submitted 172 project ideas for Community Choice Grants.

After vetting and feasibility analysis by Metro and partner staff, 82 project ideas moved forward for further project development. In addition, several land acquisition ideas moved forward for further potential real estate negotiation under the program area Protect and Restore.

Through three mini-community design workshops at events, partner jurisdiction staff, community members, and the design consultant refined project ideas into conceptual illustrations and narratives. The resulting 82 projects were then included in an online ballot in October 2025.

During October 7 – November 7, 2025, community members cast 1,476 complete individual votes using ranked choice voting to select 50 projects to move on to additional development.

After further vetting and consultation with local park providers and partner organizations, 37 projects were developed by community members, partner and design consultants through individual design meetings and at four community design workshops in February 2026.

The Final Vote from April 20 – June 15, 2026, allowed community from the entire Metro region to recommend which of the final 32 projects to put before Metro Council. This process received 3,164 individual, verified votes over the course of voting on a bilingual ranked-choice ballot of the 32 projects. A review committee of local subject-area experts provided oversight of the results of the community vote and formally recommend 23 projects to Metro Council for community choice grant awards on July 21, 2026.

HOW DOES THIS ADVANCE METRO'S CLIMATE ACTION GOALS?

The Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants program advances Metro's climate action goals through implementation of the 2019 PN Bond and program criteria around climate resilience. The resulting projects and recommended funding awards demonstrated a focus on watershed health, restoration of natural areas, and connecting people to parks and nature fulfills climate resiliency in a broad way. In addition, many of these projects are located in communities designated by Metro as equity focal areas.

KNOWN OPPOSITION/SUPPORT/COMMUNITY FEEDBACK /NO KNOWN OPPOSITION.

See above description of community engagement. No known opposition.

EXPLICIT LIST OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT.

The Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants program has been shaped at each step by community members, park providers, and community organizations. The program focus and description in the 2019 parks and nature bond measure explicitly reflects the feedback received during the bond development process in 2018 and 2019 through focused stakeholder discussions

and community forums. In addition, feedback collected during the refinement of other bond programs in 2021 and 2022 have also helped shape the grants guidebook, review committee composition and focus for this pilot.

In Spring 2022, Metro staff worked with the Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants Program Design and Review Committee, to refine and build the framework of the Program based on the direction of the 2019 PN Bond to create the Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants Guidebook that identified the desired outcomes for investments and eligibility requirements for the initial cycle of Program funding.

The 2022 Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants pilot (now called Community Choice Grants) Program Design and Review Committee was selected through an open recruitment process and included Blanca Gaytan Farfan (East Portland Rising Community Projects), Theresa Huang (Urban Greenspaces Institute), Jeffrey Lee (Portland Bureau of Environmental Services), Jairaj Singh (Unite Oregon), Alisa Chen (Grow Portland), and Kevin Hughes (Hillsboro Parks and Recreation). One committee member was invited but was unable to serve: Anthony Bradley (Play Grow Learn).

As outlined in the parks and nature bond measure, the review committee comes from a wide variety of backgrounds and experience on best practices related to racial equity, community engagement, and climate resilience and water quality, habitat restoration and traditional ecological knowledge to create the greatest benefits for people, plants, and wildlife. Committee members are committed to Metro's parks and nature mission and to supporting opportunities for communities of color and other historically marginalized groups to design and build access to nature for their communities.

Throughout this second round of Community Choice Grants, a coalition of local partners provided constant support and collaboration for program decisions, process refinement, outreach opportunities, and project development guidance. This partner coordination team included local Clackamas County partners from the City of Milwaukie, the City of Gladstone, the City of Oregon City, North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District, Clackamas County Water Environmental Services, Clackamas River Water and Clackamas River Water Providers, Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Greater Oregon City Watershed Council, and North Clackamas Watershed Council.

Non-profit members and one special district member of the continuous Clackamas County Partners Coordination team served as the Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants review committee. These individuals were sought for their technical expertise and backgrounds listed above, knowledge of the Clackamas County nature and community, and their knowledge of the Community Choice Grants process, program and policies. Since Community Choice Grants result in projects on public land, the non-profit members and one special district member listed have limited or no conflicts of interest in the final 32 projects.

Members included: Amy Barton, Clackamas River Basin Watershed Council; Heather Neilsen, Clackamas Soil and Water Conversation District; Tom Gaskill, Greater Oregon City Watershed Council; Jennifer Hamilton, Johnson Creek Watershed Council; Noah Jenkins, Johnson Creek

Watershed Council; Amy van Riessen, North Clackamas Watershed Council; Neil Schulman, North Clackamas Watershed Council; and Kira Smith, North Clackamas Watershed Council and Greater Oregon City Watershed.

Committee members declared any direct conflict of interest in the proposals and did not score or participate directly in the discussion or ranking of an application where they had a conflict.

LEGAL ANTECEDENTS

Resolution No. 19-4988, “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area General Obligation Bonds in the amount of \$475 million to Fund Nature Area and Water Quality Protection and to Connect People to Nature Close to Home; and Setting Forth the Official Intent of the Metro Council to Reimburse Certain Expenditures Out of the Proceeds of Said Bonds upon Issuance” was adopted on June 6, 2019.

Resolution No. 06-3672B, “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area A General Obligation Bond Indebtedness in the Amount of \$227.4 Million to Fund Natural Area Acquisition and Water Quality Protection” was adopted March 9, 2006.

Resolution No. 05-3574A, “Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods” was adopted in 2005.

ANTICIPATED EFFECTS

Approval of Resolution No. 26-5581 allows staff to advance Council direction to award funding to all 23 proposed projects through successful executed funding agreements. Metro will enter into Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) with governmental agencies and grant agreements with non-governmental agencies.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (CURRENT YEAR AND ONGOING)

No new financial implications result from this resolution. Metro Council approved funding in the 2019 PN Bond for the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants program for grants funding community-led projects.



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
oregonmetro.gov

Agenda #: 2.3

File #: RES 26-5625

Agenda Date: 7/21/2026

Resolution No. 26-5625 For the Purpose of Approving Funding for Protect and Restore Land Community-Led Acquisition Grants

Jon Blasher, Parks and Nature Director
Crista Gardner, Capital Grants Program Manager
Gabrielle Brown, Capital Grants Program Manager

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING FUNDING	)	RESOLUTION NO. 26-5625
FOR PROTECT AND RESTORE LAND	)	
COMMUNITY-LED ACQUISITION GRANTS	)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
	)	Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with
	)	Council President Juan Carlos González

WHEREAS, in June 2019, the Metro Council referred to the Metro area voters a ballot measure, Resolution No. 19-4988, authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$475,000,000.00 for the purpose of funding natural area and water quality protection and to connect people to nature close to home (the Bond Measure); and

WHEREAS, at the general election held on November 5, 2019, the Metro Area voters approved the Bond Measure, creating a Protect and Restore Land program (the Program) that includes a pilot project for community-led land acquisition designed to support community driven projects; and

WHEREAS, the Program's proposed grant awards were identified by community in Metro Council District 2 East of the Willamette River, using the engagement process of the Nature in Neighborhoods community choice grants; and

WHEREAS, Metro staff and local partner agencies have reviewed and evaluated the Program project submissions and recommend to the Metro Council for award the 6 projects listed in Exhibit A; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council

1. Awards Program grant funds for the 6 projects listed in Exhibit A; and
2. Directs the Chief Operating Officer to execute all contracts necessary to implement the grant awards.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 21st day of July 2026.

Juan Carlos González, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

Protect and Restore Land Community-Led Acquisition Grants
Funding Recommendations to the Metro Council

Total award amount recommended: up to \$4.45 million

Acquisition Project(s): 3 parcels, less than 1-acre each, with river frontage in the floodplain

Grant Amount: up to \$150,000

Recipient: City of Milwaukie

Climate Resilience criteria met:

- Protect, connect and restore habitat to support strong populations of native plants, fish and wildlife that can adapt to a changing climate.
- Protect and restore floodplains, headwaters, streams and wetlands to increase their capacity to handle stormwater to protect vulnerable communities from flooding.

Protect and Restore Land criteria met:

- Protect clean water for people, fish and wildlife. Improve water quality and quantity. Protect headwaters, wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas and help prevent flooding in urban areas.
- Protect and restore culturally significant plant communities. Prioritize culturally significant plants in partnership with greater Portland's Indigenous community.
- Protect, connect and improve habitat for native fish and wildlife. Increase focus on salmon, trout, steelhead and lamprey.
- Acquire land to provide future potential access to nature for people, scenic views, and community gathering spaces. Prioritize land acquisition with the potential to increase access to nature for communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with low incomes and other historically marginalized communities.
- Acquire and restore land in urban areas, prioritizing investments in nature closer to where people live.

Acquisition Project: approximately 6 acres of former tree farm

Grant Amount: up to \$3,000,000

Recipient: City of Milwaukie

Climate Resilience criteria met:

- Protect, connect and restore habitat to support strong populations of native plants, fish and wildlife that can adapt to a changing climate.
- Protect and restore floodplains, headwaters, streams and wetlands to increase their capacity to handle stormwater to protect vulnerable communities from flooding.

Protect and Restore Land criteria met:

- Protect clean water for people, fish and wildlife. Improve water quality and quantity. Protect headwaters, wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas and help prevent flooding in urban areas.
- Protect, connect and improve habitat for native fish and wildlife. Increase focus on salmon, trout, steelhead and lamprey.
- Acquire land to provide future potential access to nature for people, scenic views, and community gathering spaces. Prioritize land acquisition with the potential to increase access to nature for communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with low incomes and other

historically marginalized communities.

- Acquire and restore land in urban areas, prioritizing investments in nature closer to where people live.

Acquisition Project: approximately 1.5 acres adjacent to City of Gladstone open space

Grant Amount: up to \$1,200,000

Recipient: City of Gladstone

Climate Resilience criteria met:

- Protect, connect and restore habitat to support strong populations of native plants, fish and wildlife that can adapt to a changing climate.

Protect and Restore Land criteria met:

- Protect and restore culturally significant plant communities. Prioritize culturally significant plants in partnership with greater Portland's Indigenous community.
- Protect, connect and improve habitat for native fish and wildlife. Increase focus on salmon, trout, steelhead and lamprey.
- Acquire land to provide future potential access to nature for people, scenic views, and community gathering spaces. Prioritize land acquisition with the potential to increase access to nature for communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with low incomes and other historically marginalized communities.
- Acquire and restore land in urban areas, prioritizing investments in nature closer to where people live.

Acquisition Project: less than 2-acre parcel with river frontage in the floodplain

Grant Amount: up to \$100,000

Recipient: Clackamas County

Climate Resilience criteria met:

- Protect, connect and restore habitat to support strong populations of native plants, fish and wildlife that can adapt to a changing climate.
- Protect and restore floodplains, headwaters, streams and wetlands to increase their capacity to handle stormwater to protect vulnerable communities from flooding.

Protect and Restore Land criteria met:

- Protect clean water for people, fish and wildlife. Improve water quality and quantity. Protect headwaters, wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas and help prevent flooding in urban areas.
- Protect and restore culturally significant plant communities. Prioritize culturally significant plants in partnership with greater Portland's Indigenous community.
- Protect, connect and improve habitat for native fish and wildlife. Increase focus on salmon, trout, steelhead and lamprey.
- Acquire land to provide future potential access to nature for people, scenic views, and community gathering spaces. Prioritize land acquisition with the potential to increase access to nature for communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with low incomes and other historically marginalized communities.
- Acquire and restore land in urban areas, prioritizing investments in nature closer to where people live.

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 26-5625, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING PROTECT AND RESTORE LAND COMMUNITY-LED ACQUISITION GRANTS

Date: June 23, 2026

Presenters: Jon Blasher, Crista Gardner,
Gabrielle Brown

Department: Parks and Nature

Meeting: July 21, 2026

Prepared by: Shannon Leary

ISSUE STATEMENT

Since 1995, voters in greater Portland have passed three bond measures that protect the region's air and water, restore fish and wildlife habitat, and connect people with nature. In November 2019, voters in greater Portland overwhelmingly approved a \$475 million parks and nature bond which included three critical aspects to this work: racial equity, community engagement and climate resilience. All six programs in the bond are launched and making investments in parks, trails and natural areas across the region.

The Parks and Nature bond's protect and restore land program includes a pilot project for community-led land acquisition which is designed to support community driven projects that protect and improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, support climate resiliency and/or increase people's experience of nature at the community scale and to fund community-led projects, with an emphasis on benefitting historically marginalized communities.

Staff is presenting for Council consideration and approval a slate of funding awards through this program.

ACTION REQUESTED

Council consideration and approval of Resolution No. 26-5625

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

By approving the pilot round of community led acquisition funding, Metro Council advances the intended purpose, principles and criteria of the 2019 PN Bond resolution. Bond funds from this program protect and connect greater Portland's special places, especially river and stream banks, headwaters, floodplains, wetlands, oak and prairie habitat, forests and culturally significant sites by purchasing land from willing sellers and restoring it to support plants, animals and people.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Do the proposed project awards align with Council policy direction and expectations related to implementing the community led acquisition pilot program for the Protect and Restore Land program?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Option 1: Metro Council approval of Resolution No. 26-5625 allows staff to advance Council direction to award funding to all 6 proposed projects through successful executed funding agreements.

Option 2: Metro Council declining to approve Resolution No. 26-5625 would result in no funding awards through the Protect and Restore community-led acquisition pilot program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that Metro Council award funding to the proposed projects listed in Exhibit A.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

This work builds on the 1995 and 2006 bond measures, which included funds for land acquisition for conservation and future trail development. The 2019 Parks and Nature bond measure, referred to the voters by the Metro Council in June of 2019, established principles and criteria to guide protecting and restoring greater Portland's special places and securing gaps in the regional trail system in geographically specific target areas and regional trail corridors. The 2019 Parks and Nature bond measure also created an eligible program activity of a pilot project for community-led acquisition. Other program activities within the Protect and Restore Land program area focus on Metro-led acquisition, stabilization and restoration activities that are prioritized through community engagement.

To implement the pilot project for community-led acquisition, the Protect and Restore Land program partnered with the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grant program. The proposed Protect and Restore Land grant awards were identified by community under the engagement process of the Nature in Neighborhoods community choice grants in Metro Council District 2 East of the Willamette River, which includes the cities of Gladstone, Johnson City, Milwaukie, Oregon City, unincorporated parts of Clackamas County, and the parks provider of North Clackamas Parks and Recreation District.. Metro staff worked together to efficiently coordinate efforts to allocate Protect and Restore Land grant funding for land acquisition ideas brought forth by community members.

Outreach for this grant opportunity was conducted through social media and online venues, direct mailings, email listservs, parks director meetings, local advisory board meetings, and a series of open public events and tabling opportunities at community venues. Outreach was conducted with the help of local parks providers, watershed and conservation organizations, local special districts, grant makers, and other Metro teams.

Throughout this second round of Community Choice Grants and Protect and Restore community-led acquisitions program, a coalition of local partners provided constant support and collaboration for program decisions, process refinement, outreach opportunities, and project development guidance. This partner coordination team included local Clackamas County partners from the City of Milwaukie, the City of Gladstone, the City of Oregon City, North Clackamas Parks & Recreation District, Clackamas County Water Environmental Services, Clackamas River Water and Clackamas River Water Providers, Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Greater Oregon City Watershed Council, and North Clackamas Watershed Council.

In Spring 2025, Metro and its partners conducted extensive outreach via three community workshops, one accessibility workshop, various community events, social media, direct mailers,

newsletters, and emails. By July 1, 2025, community submitted 172 project ideas for Community Choice Grants, including these land acquisitions.

After vetting and feasibility analysis by Metro and partner staff, 82 project ideas moved forward for further project development through the Nature in Neighborhoods community choice grants funding. In addition, several land acquisition ideas moved forward for further potential funding under the program area Protect and Restore through its pilot project for community-led acquisition.

The land acquisition projects that would be funded through the community-led acquisition pilot project require a local park provider to hold and capitalize the asset, so Parks and Nature staff provided initial technical assistance to local park providers to determine if the land acquisition ideas would be feasible for the local park provider and if there may be a willing seller.

Six land acquisition projects were determined to be likely feasible based on these initial assessments and are recommended for funding, so that the local park provider can engage in further negotiations with the willing seller landowners. Parks and Nature real estate staff will continue to provide technical assistance to local park providers as needed. Metro and the local park provider will enter into an intergovernmental agreement outlining the technical assistance Parks and Nature real estate staff will provide and the conditions for grant funding approval.

KNOWN OPPOSITION/SUPPORT/COMMUNITY FEEDBACK /NO KNOWN OPPOSITION.

See above description of community engagement. No known opposition.

LEGAL ANTECEDENTS

Resolution No. 19-4988, “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area General Obligation Bonds in the amount of \$475 million to Fund Nature Area and Water Quality Protection and to Connect People to Nature Close to Home; and Setting Forth the Official Intent of the Metro Council to Reimburse Certain Expenditures Out of the Proceeds of Said Bonds upon Issuance” was adopted on June 6, 2019.

Resolution No. 06-3672B, “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area A General Obligation Bond Indebtedness in the Amount of \$227.4 Million to Fund Natural Area Acquisition and Water Quality Protection” was adopted March 9, 2006.

Resolution No. 05-3574A, “Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods” was adopted in 2005.

ANTICIPATED EFFECTS

Approval of Resolution No. 26-5625 allows staff to advance Council direction to award funding to all 6 proposed projects through successful executed funding agreements. Metro will enter into Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) with governmental agencies on a form that is approved by the Office of Metro Attorney.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (CURRENT YEAR AND ONGOING)

Up to \$5m of funds from the Protect and Restore Land program of the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond will be directed to this pilot project. The \$155m program has spent \$74.3m as of March 31, 2026 and is expected to exhaust funds by 2029.



Metro

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Portland, OR 97232-2736
oregonmetro.gov

Agenda #: 2.4

File #: RES 26-5580

Agenda Date: 7/21/2026

Resolution No. 26-5580 For the Purpose of Approving 2026-26 Nature in Neighborhoods
Community Stewardship Community Stewardship and Restoration Community Grants

Jon Blasher (he/him), Parks and Nature Director
Karissa Lowe, Community Grants Program Manager

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING 2025-26	)	RESOLUTION NO. 26-5580
NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS	)	
COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP AND	)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer Marissa
RESTORATION COMMUNITY GRANTS	)	Madrigal in concurrence with Council
	)	President Juan Carlos González

WHEREAS, in 2005, the Metro Council established an initiative designed to protect and restore our region's significant fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature as provided in Resolution No. 05-3574A, "Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods," adopted May 12, 2005;

WHEREAS, to fulfill the goals of this regional initiative, the Metro Council approved Resolution No. 05-3580A to establish the Nature in Neighborhoods grant program for local communities;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council reaffirmed the grant program's purpose, eligibility and funding criteria via Resolution No. 12-4398 when the council referred a 5-year local option levy for Metro's parks and natural areas to the voters, and called for the creation of a committee to review grant applications and make award recommendations to the Metro Council;

WHEREAS, in May 2013, voters in the Metro region approved the 5-year local option levy which included new and expanded funding for this grant program, referred to in the levy as Nature in Neighborhoods community grants;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the first round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration and Community Stewardship grants in September 2014 via Resolution No. 14-4554;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the second round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration and Community Stewardship grants in November 2015 via Resolution No. 15-4644;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the third round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration community grants in September 2016 via Resolution No. 16-4725;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council confirmed the grant program's purpose and funding via Resolution No. 16-4690, when the council referred the renewal of Metro's local option levy for Metro's parks and natural areas to the voters;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council approved Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion via Resolution No. 16-4708, which directs the agency to incorporate racial equity into all aspects of its work;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the fourth round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration community grants in June 2019 via Resolution No. 19-4985;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the fifth round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration community grants in November 2021 via Resolution No. 21-5213;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council reaffirmed the grant program's purpose, eligibility and funding criteria via Resolution No. 22-5279 when the council referred a 5-year local option levy for Metro's parks

and natural areas to the voters, and called for the creation of a committee to review grant applications and make award recommendations to the Metro Council;

WHEREAS, in May 2022, voters in the Metro region approved the 5-year local option levy which included new and expanded funding for this grant program, referred to in the levy as Nature in Neighborhoods community grants;

WHEREAS, Metro awarded the first round of Nature in Neighborhood Restoration community grants in May 2024 via Resolution No. 24-5417;

WHEREAS, Metro has solicited and received applications for 2025-26 Nature in Neighborhoods Community Stewardship and Restoration grants, and the grant review committee has identified the proposals which best meet the grant criteria and the goals of the Nature in Neighborhoods community grant program; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council hereby approves the award of the 2025-26 Nature in Neighborhoods Community Stewardship and Restoration community grants to those recipients listed in Exhibit A and for the amounts listed for each individual award.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 21st day of July 2026.

Juan Carlos González, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

Exhibit A to Resolution 26-5580

Recommended for funding

The 2025-26 Nature in Neighborhood community stewardship and restoration grants review committee recommends the following ten (10) proposals for funding to the Metro Council.

The Metro Council makes all final grant decisions and is scheduled to decide final grant awards on July 21, 2026.

Black Futures Farm HEAP: Healing, Education, Afroecology, and Permaculture

Recipient: Black Futures Farm

Grant amount: \$100,000

Project Partners: Black Futures Farm, Feed'Em Freedom Foundation, Wonderfolk, The Uprise Collective

Program summary: This project supports the work of Black Futures Farm, which is a Black-centered, urban agricultural space working to reconnect Black people to the land and inspire all people to create meaningful change through food, knowledge, culture, and outdoor experiences.

H.E.A.L. Garden: Heritage, Ecology, and Allied Legacies

Recipient: The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization

Grant amount: \$100,000

Project Partners: The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, Metro, Wisdom of the Elders, Ed Edmo, Olesya Uglova Soul-Body-Mind LLC, EarthyBirth LLC, City of Portland - Bureau of Environmental Sustainability

Program summary: This project will unite members of Metro's Indigenous, Latinx, and Slavic/Eastern European communities to create an accessible, multicultural community garden and events that foster a resilient community identity rooted in care for the land and each other.

Learning Gardens Lab Community Partnerships: Agroecology & Land Stewardship Internship and Certificate Program

Recipient: Learning Gardens Laboratory

Grant amount: \$99,946

Project Partners: Learning Gardens Laboratory, Solarpunx PDX, Portland State University's (PSU) Indigenous Traditional Ecological & Cultural Knowledge (ITECK) Center

Program summary: This project is a collaboration between Learning Gardens Laboratory, Solarpunx, and PSU's ITECK program and will co-create a paid internship and certificate program. This pilot removes economic barriers to workforce development, restores native habitats, and expands community access to land and traditional First Foods.

GoFishPI Program - Get Out and Fish with Living Islands 2026**Recipient:** Living Islands**Grant amount:** \$100,000**Project Partners:** Living Islands, Oregon State University College of Science Director of Equity and Access Kameron Kadooka (lead presenter), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Antonio Salgado, City of Portland SuperFund Education Miranda Mishan, Portland Harbor Community Coalition Cassie Cohen**Program summary:** This project engages Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities in culturally rooted fishing camps and excursions that inspire environmental stewardship, food sovereignty, and responsible, sustainable use of Oregon waterways.**Youth Growing Food and Community at Kindness Farm****Recipient:** Northwest Youth Corps**Grant amount:** \$ 45,057**Project Partners:** Northwest Youth Corps, Kindness Farm, Girl's Inc. of the PNW, David Douglas High School, Dharma Rain Zen Center**Program summary:** This project gives 56 Portland teens and leaders the opportunity to promote food sovereignty for historically marginalized communities through six weeks of activities at Kindness Farm. For their service, participants earn money, high school credit, and a solid work reference.**Dharma Rain Food Forest****Recipient:** Northwest Zen Sangha**Grant amount:** \$40,000**Project Partners:** Northwest Zen Sangha, Blueprint Foundation, Northwest Youth Corps, Bird Alliance of Oregon**Program summary:** This project will offer a series of classes and workshops for underserved populations. Events will take place on Northwest Zen Sangha's four acre campus. Learning activities will combine native habitat restoration with regenerative agriculture practices.**New Columbia Community Stewardship Project****Recipient:** Our Village Gardens**Grant amount:** \$29,997**Project Partners:** Our Village Gardens, Boys and Girls Club of Portland Metro, INCIGHT, Earth & Spirit Council**Program summary:** This project will improve wildlife habitat by removing invasive species and planting healthy ones, while working with partners to expand economic and environmental equity by connecting residents to Indigenous workshops, a leadership academy, and career pathways.**PIM Plant Plaza and Ecoroof****Recipient:** Portland Indigenous Marketplace**Grant amount:** \$75,000**Project Partners:** List of partners**Program summary:** This project will transform a 2500-square-foot parking lot to create a resilient and welcoming plaza with native plants, shade trees, living systems, Indigenous arts, and interpretive displays, and install an ecoroof.

POIC Natural Resource Pathway (NRP) Program

Recipient: Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc.

Grant amount: \$60,000

Project Partners: As a member of the Branch Coalition, POIC is partnered with Friends of Trees, Portland Parks & Recreation, Portland Fruit Tree Project, the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, and all other Branch Coalition members

Program summary: This project POIC's Natural Resource Pathway (NRP) programs offer low-income youth and youth of color opportunities to engage in habitat restoration and conservation, and to pursue career-track natural resource mentorship and education.

Food Sovereignty Practices Through a Disability Justice Lens

Recipient: The Uprise Collective

Grant amount: \$100,000

Project Partners: The Uprise Collective, Northwest Indigenous Food Sovereignty Alliance, NIFSA and Upstream Access

Program summary: This project utilizes cultural ecological knowledge, community partnerships and food sovereignty practices through a disability justice lens to create accessible food and traditional medicine garden spaces, as well as creating opportunities for food cultivation, preparation and preservation.

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 26-5580, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING 2025-26 NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP AND RESTORATION COMMUNITY GRANTS

Date: June 21, 2026
Department: Parks and Nature
Meeting: July 21, 2026

Prepared by: Karissa Lowe, Elizabeth
Guzman Arroyo
Presenters: Jon Blasher, Karissa Lowe

ISSUE STATEMENT

Community stewardship and restoration grants support and create partnerships in local communities that improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature.

The program has three goals: Improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat; Community partnerships, collaboration and accountability; and Economic and environmental equity. Fulfillment of these goals are the primary evaluation criteria for the proposals submitted to the Nature in Neighborhoods community stewardship and restoration grants program.

Requests for this year's funding opportunity were evaluated by a volunteer review committee. The review committee evaluated pre-applications and full applications based on the information submitted by applicants, the stated evaluation criteria, and the review committee's professional and collective judgment.

ACTION REQUESTED

The Metro Council is requested to vote to approve the award of the 2025-26 Nature in Neighborhoods community stewardship and restoration community grants to those recipients listed in Exhibit A and for the amounts listed for each individual award.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Metro Nature in Neighborhoods community grants implement the Metro Council policy direction outlined in the 2005 Title 13, 2013 Parks and Nature (PN) Levy, 2018 PN Levy and 2022 PN Levy as well as the 2016 Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion (REDI) Plan and 2025 PN REDI Action Plan, including the Racial Equity Framework. Furthermore, the community grants improve administrative processes based on lessons learned and feedback from previous grant cycles, other grantmakers, community and community research, such as Metro's 2017 report on Resident Needs and Behaviors in Portland Parks and Natural Areas and the Coalition of Communities of Color's 2011 report Philanthropy and Communities of Color in Oregon. By doing so, the community grants have evolved in step with Metro Council direction over the past 19 years to better

meet the needs of the community and organizations connecting people to nature in our region.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Does Council support and approve the grant committee's recommendation for funding awards?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

The Metro Council has the option of approving or declining the attached funding recommendations.

Approving the funding recommendations would allow the projects to begin and would obligate the full \$750,000 available to this program in this year's budget. The projects recommended for funding help people of many local communities connect with nature and with one another in the region's parks and natural areas. These projects ensure that historically marginalized communities in greater Portland enjoy the benefits of conserving land, air and water, and equitable access to safe and welcoming parks, trails and natural areas; communities enjoy learning about, helping restore, experiencing and connecting with nature and the region's natural areas. The projects recommended for funding support efforts to ensure that historically marginalized communities will prosper economically from the business of Parks and Nature in greater Portland.

Declining the funding recommendations would leave this year's \$750,000 unobligated and the recommended projects would not receive funding. This would delay distribution of this year's funds and would require program staff to redo the funding opportunity and organizations to reapply for funding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that Metro Council accept the Nature in Neighborhoods community grants review committee recommendation to the Metro Council for the following ten (10) grant awards in Exhibit A.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

How is this related to Metro's Strategic Framework or Core Mission?

Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods community stewardship and restoration program is grounded in the Regional Framework Plan, especially Chapter 3 which explicates how Metro policy supports the participation of citizens in environmental education, planning, stewardship activities, and recreational services in alignment with the Metro Citizenship Involvement Principles.

As noted in Chapter 3 of Metro's Regional Framework Plan:

"The importance of the region's natural landscape and its recreation facilities cannot be understated. They support the air we breathe, the water we drink and define the look and feel of our communities. They ensure that natural resources and habitats are protected and that citizens have recreational opportunities close to where they work and live.

Citizens throughout the region have demonstrated the importance of parks, natural areas, trails and recreation services through their support of funding measures, participation in recreational activities and volunteer community service and from what they have said in public opinion surveys. Metro recognizes the desire of citizens to have high-quality natural areas, trails and parks close to home. Metro is working with federal, state and local governments, nonprofit organizations and citizens to address and meet the park and recreation needs of the Portland metropolitan area."

The Nature in Neighborhoods community grants program community stewardship and restoration funding opportunity is responsive to Metro area residents' desire to have easy and equitable access to nature and to have opportunities to connect with nature in ways that are resonant with their personal and community priorities.

How does this advance Metro's racial equity goals?

Nature in Neighborhoods community grants advance Metro's racial equity goals by prioritizing proposals that support historically underserved communities' access to nature and which center the voices and perspectives of historically and marginalized communities.

How does this advance Metro's climate action goals?

This work supports Metro's climate change goals supporting community stewardship and restoration projects at the neighborhood level and focuses on helping individual Metro area residents build their relationship with nature, become environmental advocates, and build the skills and knowledge necessary to actively participate in restoration projects in their own homes, in their neighborhoods, and even at the regional level.

Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback

There is no known opposition. The Nature in Neighborhood community grants program has been supported by the community. Staff continuously seek opportunities to evolve and improve the program in response to community feedback.

Explicit list of stakeholder groups and individuals who have been involved in policy development

Metro has collaborated with a broad array of local stakeholders to develop this policy and program staff continue to consult with local environmental organizations and other stakeholders to refine and improve the funding opportunity.

Beyond direct feedback from the community members and community led organizations served by this program, the need for such a funding focus has been established via many sources. Work done by Metro that illuminates this need includes:

- Metro Parks and Nature Systems Plan
- 2022 Levy Renewal Framework
- Metro Parks and Nature Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion Plan
- Resident Needs and Behaviors in Portland Parks and Natural Areas – Needham and Rushing
- Connect With Nature: Planning Parks and Nature with Communities of Color

External research also highlights the importance of directing resources to historically and systemically underserved groups as an important part of efforts to address existing inequities, and offers guidance on how to more effectively implement equity-centered grantmaking:

- Philanthropy and Communities of Color in Oregon: from strategic investments to assessable impacts amidst growing racial and ethnic diversity (2011), by the Coalition of Communities of Color
- Analysis of Policies, Practices, and Programs for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (2013), by the D5 Coalition
- Incorporating Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion In Your Grant-Making Process: A Checklist Of Potential Actions (2016), by Arabella Advisors
- Oregon by the Numbers (2018), by The Ford Family Foundation
- 2021 Outdoor Participation Trends Report (2021), by the Outdoor Foundation

Parks and Nature Director Jonathan Blasher approved this year's review committee who were recruited from a diverse pool of applicants. Participation on the grant review committee is by application, which is open to all and broadly advertised. The review committee included local experts in habitat restoration, natural area land management, conservation planning, mentorship and job skill development, diversity, equity and inclusion, community partnership development, philanthropy, and grant management.

The members of the 2025-26 Nature in Neighborhoods Community Stewardship and Restoration Grants review committee are:

- Angie Morrill, *University of Oregon, Grow Your Own Program for Sapsik'wala Mentor/Elder*
- Cristy Morales Munoz, *Inti Collective LLC, West Coast manager and co-owner*
- Diego Gioseffi, *Oregon Metro, Community education and stewardship program manager*
- Gabriela Gonzalez, *Wapato Table Farm culinary herbalist and holistic nutritionist*
- Holly Beer, *PSU grad student, Leadership for Sustainable Education M.S. program*
- Jasmine Samples, *former Oregon Metro hourly employee, former nonprofit professional, current community organizer*
- Jasper Lieber, *Community volunteer and retired software engineer*

- Maya Hurst-Mayr, *Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Development manager*
- Stone Hudson, *Meyer Memorial Trust program officer*
- Winn Holly, *Legacy Emmanuel, RN Lactation Consultant*

Committee members declared any direct conflict of interest with the proposals and did not score or participate directly in the discussion or ranking of an application where they had a conflict. Perceived conflicts were also noted and recorded in meeting minutes.

Legal Antecedents:

Resolution No. 24-5417, For the Purpose of Approving 2023 Nature in Neighborhoods Community Stewardship and Restoration Community Grants

Resolution No. 22-5279, For the Purpose of Referring to the Voters of the Metro Area Renewal of the Metro's Local Option Levy for Protecting Water Quality, Restoring Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Connecting People to Nature.

Resolution No. 21-5213, For the Purpose of Approving 2021 Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Community Stewardship Community Grants

Resolution No. 19-4985, For the Purpose of Approving 2019 Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Community Stewardship Community Grants

Resolution No. 16-4690, For the Purpose of Referring to the Voters of the Metro Area Renewal of the Metro's Local Option Levy for Protecting Water Quality, Restoring Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Connecting People to Nature.

Resolution 16-4708, For the Purpose of Approving the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Resolution 16-4725, For the Purpose of Approving the 2016 Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Community Stewardship Community Grants.

Resolution No. 15-4644, For the Purpose of Approving 2015 Nature in Neighborhood Restoration and Community Stewardship Grants.

Resolution No. 14-4554, For the Purpose of Approving 2014 Nature in Neighborhood Restoration and Community Stewardship Grants.

Resolution No. 12-4398, For the Purpose of Referring to the Voters of the Metro Area a Local Option Levy for the Purpose of Preserving Water Quality, Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Maintaining Metro's Parks and Natural Areas for the Public.

Resolution No. 05-3574A, Establishing a Regional Habitat Protection, Restoration and Greenspaces Initiative called Nature in Neighborhoods.

Resolution 05-3580A, Transferring \$1,250,000 from the Balance of the FY 2004-05 Recovery Rate Stabilization Reserve to a General Fund Reserve for Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Projects.

Ordinance No. 07-1160B, Transferring \$250,000 from the Recovery Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund for Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration Projects.

Ordinance No. 09-1215B, Approving \$92,500 in the FY 2009-10 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement Grants.

Ordinance No. 10-1235B, Approving \$150,000 in the FY 2010-11 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement Grants.

Ordinance No. 12-1274A, Approving \$200,000 in the FY 2012-13 Budget and Appropriation Schedule for an additional round of Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement Grants.

Anticipated Effects

This Resolution approves the award of 2025-26 Nature in Neighborhood community stewardship and restoration community grants and begins the individual contract award process for the selected grant applicants with an anticipated project start date on or after July 21, 2026. Projects may be up to three years in length.

Financial Implications (current year and ongoing)

This Resolution authorizes award of contracts in an amount previously identified by the Metro Council in the budget for this purpose. The adopted FY 2025-26 budget includes the necessary appropriation authority for reimbursement of these grants.

BACKGROUND

For nearly two decades, the Metro Council has provided funding for grants to community groups, non-profits, and other organizations, designed to support and create partnerships in local communities that improve water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature.

In May 2013, voters approved Measure 26-152, providing new funding for Metro's parks and natural areas and providing increased funding for Nature in Neighborhoods community grants, which was referred to the voters by Metro Council (Resolution 12-4398). The Metro Council awarded Nature in Neighborhoods restoration and community stewardship grants in 2014 (Resolution 14-4554), in 2015 (Resolution 15-4644), in 2016 (Resolution 16-4725), in 2019 (Resolution 19-4985), in 2021 (Resolution 21-5213), and in 2024 (Resolution 24-5417). This year's funding opportunity is the seventh round of awards for Nature in Neighborhood community stewardship and restoration grants (Resolution 26-5580).

In November 2016, voters renewed the Metro parks and natural areas levy with the approval of Measure 26-178, referred to the voters by Metro Council (Resolution 16-4690), which continued funding for Nature in Neighborhoods community grants. Furthermore, in June 2016, the Metro Council adopted the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Resolution 16-4708), which directs the agency to incorporate racial equity into all aspects of its work.

In May 2023, voters renewed the Metro parks and natural areas levy with the approval of Measure 22-5279, which continued funding for Nature in Neighborhoods community grants. The Metro

Council awarded Nature in Neighborhoods restoration and community stewardship grants in 2023 (Resolution 24-5417).

Grant program staff used the framework provided by Metro Council in Resolutions No. 12-4398, No. 16-4690, No. 16-4708, and No. 22-5279 to develop an outreach plan, application materials, review committee and evaluation criteria for these community grants, referred to as Nature in Neighborhoods community stewardship and restoration grants. Staff also aligned Metro's grant criteria with state, regional and local conservation plans and community initiatives in order to achieve multiple benefits.