

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 25-5515, FOR THE PURPOSE OF
ADOPTING THE PARKS AND NATURE REAL ESTATE MANUAL FOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2019 PARKS AND NATURE BOND MEASURE

Date: July 8, 2025
Department: Parks and Nature
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Presenter(s), (if applicable): n/a
Length: n/a

ISSUE STATEMENT

In 1995 the Metro Council adopted an Open Spaces Implementation Work Plan providing direction and authority for the real estate acquisition program created by 1995 Open Space Bond Measure. That governing document has since been amended by the Metro Council many times over the past three decades, most recently in 2014 with the Amended and Restated Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan (the “2014 Work Plan”). Now as Metro is firmly in the implementation of the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure, it is time yet again to update the Council-approved real property acquisition parameters and due diligence guidelines. The proposed Parks and Nature Real Estate Manual (the “Real Estate Manual”), which would replace the existing 2014 Work Plan, reflects best practices for real estate transactions in the current market and ensures efficient and timely implementation of the Metro’s 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure Program.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff requests the Metro Council adopt the Parks and Nature Real Estate Manual as the framework for real property transactions and authority for the Chief Operating Officer to complete certain real property transactions.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

In accordance with past practice, review the existing 2014 Work Plan to consider whether the acquisition parameters and due diligence guidelines contained therein are relevant, and make updates as needed to ensure the policies remain reflective of best practices for program operations in 2025.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Should Metro update the existing the acquisition parameters and due diligence guidelines contained in the 2014 Work Plan to ensure they remain relevant, accurate and reflective of best practices in 2025?

Does the Real Estate Manual provide an improved framework for real estate implementation activities related to the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure and the Target Area Refinement Plans adopted by Council in 2022?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Staff propose updates to several concepts of the 2014 Amended and Restated Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan, including reformatting and simplifying the document to read more easily. See [Attachment A](#) for a summary of updates in table format, as the reformat does not allow for easily tracked changes.

Options for Council include adopting the revised Parks and Nature Real Estate Manual that incorporates the changes proposed by staff, adopting some changes and not others, or directing staff to continue to use the Natural Areas Work Plan for 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure acquisition activities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommend the Metro Council adopt the revised Parks and Nature Real Estate Manual to guide real estate acquisition activities and authorize the Chief Operating Officer to complete certain real property transactions.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

How is this related to Metro's Strategic Framework or Core Mission? How does this advance Metro's racial equity goals? How does this advance Metro's climate action goals?

The updated Parks and Nature Real Estate Manual is related to Metro's Strategic Framework and Core Mission, and advances Metro's racial equity goals and climate action goals, by more easily implementing the work directed in the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure and 2022 Target Area Refinement Plans, which center racial equity and climate resilience to protect fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and connect people to nature close to home.

Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback; Explicit list of stakeholder groups and individuals who have been involved in policy development.

This is an internal guide intended to authorize staff to efficiently and effectively implement the policy guidance in the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure and 2022 Target Area Refinement Plans, both of which included extensive community engagement. A summary of this engagement can be provided. This is not expected to be controversial as internal guidance for implementation of existing policy (the Parks and Nature Bond Measure, which is widely supported across the region).

Legal Antecedents

- Metro Code Section 2.04.050, Council Approval of Contracts

- Resolution 94-2011A: “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters a General Obligation Bond Indebtedness in the Amount of \$138.80 million to Proceed with the Acquisition of Land for a Regional System of Greenspaces.”
- Resolution 95-2228A: “For the Purpose of Authorizing the Executive Officer to Purchase Property with Accepted Acquisition Guidelines as Outlined in the Open Space Implementation Work Plan.”
- Resolution 96-2424: “For the Purpose of Authorizing the Executive Officer to Purchase Property with Accepted Acquisition Guidelines as Outlined in the Amended Open Space Implementation Work Plan.”
- Resolution 97-2483: “For the Purpose of Authorizing the Executive Officer to Execute Current and Future Leases Related to Metro’s Open Spaces Property Acquisitions”
- Resolution 01-3106: “For the Purpose of Modifying the Open Spaces Implementation Work Plan and Open Spaces Acquisition Regional Target Area Refinement Plans to Direct Future Acquisition of Properties that Satisfy Specific Identified Criteria.”
- Resolution 06-3627B: “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.”
- Resolution 07-3766A: “Authorizing the Chief Operating Officer to Purchase Property with Accepted Acquisition Guidelines as Outlined in the Natural Area Implementation Work Plan.”
- Resolution 08-3963: “Amending the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan to Authorize the Chief Operating Officer to Acquire Certain Properties When the Purchase Price is Equal to Or Less Than \$5,000.”
- Resolution 10-4122: “For the Purpose of Amending the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan to Authorize the Chief Operating Officer to More Efficiently Acquire and Assign Trail Easements.”
- Resolution 14-4536: “For the Purpose of Amending and Updating the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan.”
- Resolution 19-4988: “For the Purpose of Submitting to the Voters of the Metro Area General Obligation Bond in the Amount of \$475 Million to Fund Natural Area and Water Quality Protection and to Connect People to Nature Close to Home.”
- Resolution 19-5055: “For the Purpose of Accepting the November 5, 2019 General Election Abstract of Votes for Metro and Authorizing Continuation of the Parks and Nature Program During Refinement Planning.”
- Resolution 22-5250: “For the Purpose of Approving Acquisition Target Area Refinement Plans for the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure.”
- Resolution 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”

Anticipated Effects

Authority has previously been provided to the Chief Operating Officer to purchase real property within accepted guidelines of the Natural Areas Work Plan. The proposed Resolution recommends the adoption of a Parks and Nature Real Estate Manual, which is very similar to the Natural Areas Work Plan currently being used, such that the anticipated effects of this action shall mostly involve minor adjustments in staff action but shall not represent a substantial change in procedure.

Financial Implications (current year and ongoing)

All acquisitions have been and will continue to be completed using 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure funds. Minor savings will be seen in due diligence expense for some transactions. Funds are appropriated appropriately annually.

BACKGROUND

Nearly 30 years ago, voters passed the 1995 Open Spaces, Parks and Streams Bond Measure, which authorized Metro to issue up to \$135.6 million in general obligation bonds for the protection of open spaces, parks, and streams. The Open Spaces Implementation Work Plan ("Open Spaces Work Plan") provided the framework for implementation of the 1995 Open Spaces Bond Measure activities.

In 2006, voters again directed Metro to acquire property through passage of the 2006 Natural Areas Bond Measure for the protection of natural areas, to improve water quality, and protect fish and wildlife habitat. The Open Spaces Work Plan continued to support the 2006 Bond Measure, although the *Acquisition Parameters* and *Due Diligence Guidelines* sections were subsequently replaced in 2007 by the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan to reflect changed conditions. The Metro Council additionally approved various Natural Areas resolutions over the ensuing decade, essentially, updating and amending the Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan in pieces. In 2014 staff undertook a comprehensive review of content and thresholds in the Work Plan, as well as the various stand-alone resolutions, and presented an Amended and Restated Natural Areas Implementation Work Plan (2014 Natural Areas Work Plan) to Council for adoption.

In 2019 voters in the region again supported continuation of the protection of fish and wildlife habitat and water quality through passage of a \$475 million Parks and Nature Bond Measure. At that time the Metro Council directed staff to acquire and manage property related to the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure in accordance with the 2014 Natural Areas Work Plan and an existing leasing policy until such time as these documents may be amended after refinement planning was completed for the new measure.

At this time, refinement has been completed, and Parks and Nature staff have completed over 30 real estate transactions with the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure. With this information and experience in hand, staff have reviewed the entirety of the 2014 Natural Areas Work Plan to consider whether it remains relevant, accurate, and reflective of the best practices Metro is using on the ground today, or if improvements could be made. The proposed Real Estate Manual is a result of this analysis.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Table of Real Estate Manual updates and impacts