

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 26-5578, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING A THIRD ROUND OF FUNDING FOR THE PARKS AND NATURE BOND LARGE SCALE COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM

Date: July 15, 2026

Department: Parks and Nature

Meeting Date: July 21, 2026

Prepared by: Linda Bartolini Venegas,
she/her, large-scale community visions
program manager

Presenters: Jon Blasher, he/him, Parks and
Nature Director, Linda Bartolini Venegas
she/her, large scale community visions
program manager

Length: 20 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Funded through the 2019 Parks and Nature bond and codified in Resolution No. 19-4988, The Large-scale community visions (LSCV) grant program supports large-scale projects that uplift communities by leveraging nature to achieve benefits such as affordable housing, transportation improvements and job opportunities.

In December 2025, a notice of funding availability was issued for up to \$8 million for the third cycle of the program. The program received eleven letters of interest and seven applications. Approval of Resolution No. 26-5578 allows staff to advance Council direction to award funding for a third round of the large-scale community visions program.

ACTION REQUESTED

Council consideration and approval of Resolution No. 26-5578.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Council direction has shaped the Large-scale community visions program and will continue to do so. Projects awarded under the program are expected to deliver policy outcomes identified in the 2019 Parks and Nature bond. By focusing on the intersection of nature and greening with existing or planned housing and transportation developments, the program advances investments that strengthen climate resilience across the region while leveraging regional outcomes in housing, community and economic development and transportation.

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 stated in the LSCV program handbook. The Metro Council will select projects and make all awards for funding allocations.

POLICY QUESTION

Does Council approve the recommendation for funding?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Council can accept the recommendation for funding, make alternate recommendations and funding decisions, or award no funding and direct staff to revise the process.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

After reviewing staff evaluations, the Metro Council signaled at a July 14 work session that the four projects outlined in Exhibit A of the resolution have the potential to fully address the bond measure and program requirements. Staff recommends Council approve Resolution 26-5578 which includes four projects and proposes partial awards on three of the proposed projects, which may introduce risk of projects not advancing to full implementation within bond timelines.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Through the Parks and Nature bond measure, Metro has awarded over \$100 million to date through Local Share, grants, trails and LSCV. Staff are planning for this final cycle of LSCV and one additional cycle of Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants during the second half of the life of the bond. Together these investments will touch every community in the region.

Metro is planning for most bond funds to be spent down by July 2031, to maintain legal compliance, bond rating, and accountability with voters in the region. Large-scale projects require extensive master planning, design, permitting, and construction sequencing that may extend beyond traditional capital timelines and create delivery risk within the bond spend-down timeline, so the third cycle of the program focused on project delivery and readiness.

The unique focus of this program on the intersection of nature and greening with existing or planned housing and transportation developments allows the agency to advance investments that strengthen climate resilience in communities across the region and leverage regional outcomes in housing, community and economic development and transportation. The projects recommended for funding demonstrate strong alignment with Council directed criteria and vision for the program.

HOW DOES THIS ADVANCE METRO'S RACIAL EQUITY GOALS?

The Large-scale community visions program advances Metro's racial equity goals set by 2019 Parks and Nature Bond criteria around meaningful community engagement and racial equity and program specific criteria.

HOW DOES THIS ADVANCE METRO'S CLIMATE ACTION GOALS?

The program advances Metro's climate action goals through implementation of the 2019 Parks and Nature 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 expanded tree canopy.

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

Program staff have collaborated with a broad array of local stakeholders to develop this policy and program staff continue to consult with local organizations, jurisdictions and other stakeholders to refine and improve the funding opportunity.

The staff review team consists of internal Metro staff from Parks and Nature, Planning and Development Research, Council and Government Affairs and Policy Department, with specific areas of expertise: Hau Hagedorn (Urban/Regional Planning), Jason Nolin (Transportation Planning), Oscar Orejel (Real Estate/Acquisitions), Jonathan Soll (Habitat/Science), Siena Lopez-Johnston (Tribal Affairs and Govt. Relations), Yohannes Wolday (Strategic Funding/Partnerships), Layne Wyse (Parks Planning), and Jess Zdeb (Long-range Strategic Planning).

LEGAL ANTECEDENTS

Metro Council approved the criteria, processes and desired outcomes described in the program handbook through approval of Resolution 22-5269 on June 23, 2022, and directed the Chief Operating Officer to implement the first cycle of funding for the program generally in accordance with the framework described in the program handbook.

Approval of Resolution 23-5322 in May 2023 “For the purpose of selecting three Parks and Nature bond large-scale community visions projects and awarding funding for the initial program cycle” which designated three projects for funding.

In March 2024, Metro Council approved Resolution No. 24-5391, which advanced a set of adjustments to program criteria that is intended to better meet the landscape of project opportunities on the ground and create program accessibility across the region, as well as allowed for a notice of funding availability to begin in spring 2024.

In December 2024, Metro Council approved Resolution 24-5445, for the purpose of awarding the Kellogg Creek Restoration and Community Enhancement Project up to \$10 million in program funding.

The third cycle of the program was governed by the 2025 handbook; the criteria in the handbook was affirmed by Council in 2022 and 2024. The handbook governs the decision-making process of the program.

ANTICIPATED EFFECTS

Approval of Resolution 26-5578 allows staff to advance Council direction to award funding through successfully executed funding agreements.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No new financial implications result from this resolution.

ATTACHMENTS

None