

LARGE-SCALE COMMUNITY VISIONS: DIRECTION ON TIMELINE

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Department: Parks and Nature

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Length: 30 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 and safe, reliable transportation and job opportunities.

The LSCV program, in its goal of funding transformative and complex projects, faces a unique set of challenges. These include:

- Securing public ownership for pilot projects
- Managing the bond spend-down timeline
- Strategically allocating remaining funds

A key consideration in addressing these challenges is whether to establish clear deadlines for project progress for LSCV awarded projects that are not yet under contract.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff requests Council direction on establishing clear deadlines for project progress for awarded LSCV projects that are not yet under contract.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The unique focus of this program on the intersection of nature and greening with existing or planned housing, transportation or workforce developments allows Metro to advance investments that strengthen climate resilience in communities across the region and leverage regional outcomes in housing, community and economic development and transportation.

In the first two cycles, Metro Council made conditional awards totaling up to \$22 million; however, these awards have not yet been finalized through agreements. The third and final cycle has \$8 million available. While \$8 million remains unallocated, a significant portion of

previously awarded funding has not yet been spent by program awardees. The program must balance advancing awarded projects and achieving bond spend-down timelines.

Additionally, the program is funded by general obligation bond funds, and Oregon law requires that the funds only be used to pay for capitalizable costs with the resulting asset being owned by a public entity. As a result, projects without a committed public partner are not eligible to proceed to funding agreements.

To address these challenges, staff propose adopting clear timelines for LSCV awarded projects not yet under contract. Adopting deadlines for these projects will:

- Give each project time to work out public ownership agreements
- Allow time for Metro to craft agreements and each project to spend down ahead of 2031 bond spend-down timeline
- If they are unable to reach agreement with public agency, Metro will work with Council on how to best utilize the un-spent LSCV funds

Together, these factors present a set of interrelated policy considerations for Council, including ensuring the feasibility and timely delivery of LSCV projects, meeting bond spend-down requirements, and securing alignment with bond legal requirements. Council direction will shape the program's ability to deliver on its intended outcomes while managing financial risk and implementation readiness.

POLICY QUESTIONS

- Does the Metro Council support establishing clear timelines for project progress?
- What timeframe should be provided for these projects to demonstrate measurable progress toward readiness?

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council consider establishing clear deadlines for project progress and provide direction on a 2028 timeframe for these projects to demonstrate measurable progress toward readiness.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Metro is planning for the majority of bond funds to be spent down by July 2031, in order 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.

The LSCV program was designed to be ambitious, and implementation of the program has surfaced challenges. With the lessons learned since 2023, cross-agency coordination has improved, technical schedule mapping is beginning, and the third cycle is progressing on schedule. Council's direction today will provide further clarity, accountability, and risk mitigation while maintaining bond, department and program goals.

BACKGROUND

An overview of the program and key updates:

- In June 2022, Metro Council approved a handbook that identified desired outcomes and eligibility requirements and initiated a pilot project solicitation of up to \$10 million.
- In Spring 2023, Metro Council designated the following projects with conditional funding in the pilot round of the program:
 - Albina Vision Trust – Site acquisition adjunct to Willamette River, \$5 million
 - OMSI/CRTFIC – Waterfront Education Park, \$7 million
 - Trust for Public Lands/Oregon State University – acquisition of private timber site in the Tualatin Mountains area, \$3.5 million
- Following the pilot round, Council directed staff to refine the program by assessing feasibility and identifying potential projects ahead of the next solicitation.
- The second cycle launched in April 2024 with up to \$10 million available. Six LOIs were received, and three applicants were invited to submit full proposals.
- In December 2024, Metro Council awarded the following project in the second round of the program:
 - North Clackamas Watersheds Council, ODOT, City of Milwaukie, and American Rivers for restoration and improved fish passage of Kellogg Creek in Milwaukie, \$10 million

ATTACHMENTS

None