

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

Department: Parks and Nature

Meeting: July 21, 2026

Prepared by: Shannon Leary

Presenters: Jon Blasher, 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 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.