

PRESENTATION OF PARKS AND NATURE ANNUAL REPORT FY 23/24 AND PARKS
AND FY 23/24 NATURAL AREAS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Date: 10/31/2024
Department: Parks and Nature
Meeting Date: 11/14/2024

Prepared by: Beth Cohen, Cory Eldridge,
Presenter: Jon Blasher, Parks and Nature,
Cary Watters, Natural Areas Oversight
Committee Co-Chair
Length: 30 minutes

ACTION REQUESTED

Receive the Parks and Nature annual report for fiscal year 23-24 and the Natural Areas Oversight Committee year three report. Share thoughts and questions about Metro's parks and nature work during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

BACKGROUND

For more than two decades, voters have repeatedly trusted Metro to protect clean water, restore fish and wildlife habitat and provide opportunities for people to connect with nature close to home through the passage of three capital bond measures and a local option levy renewed twice by the region's voters. The Parks and Nature annual report and the Natural Areas Oversight Committee year three report illustrate Parks and Nature's commitment to transparency and accountability in reporting regularly on how Metro's work helps deliver on the promises of these voter-approved measures.

The Parks and Nature annual report describes how Metro invests in nature and community wellbeing across the region by explaining the department's work on natural area acquisition and restoration, investments to make Metro's portfolio of developed parks and natural areas more safe and welcoming, and investments in community-driven projects. The report also highlights the impact of specific examples of programs, purchases or projects that happened during the fiscal year and provides an overview of the department's spending during the 2023-2024 fiscal year, which runs from July to June of each year.

The report, which is developed by Parks and Nature staff and leadership and is designed and formatted to be accessible to multiple audiences and interested parties across the region, is published in early November via Metro News. Parks and Nature presented last year's report to the Metro Council in November 2023.

[The Natural Areas and Capital Program Performance Oversight Committee](#), which provides independent oversight of the 2019 parks and nature bond, is responsible for reporting annually to the Metro Council on progress in bond implementation as well as areas for

improvement. The committee presented its year two report to the Metro Council in June 2023.

The committee's year three report to the Metro Council and the region summarizes the committee's understanding of progress on the 2019 parks and nature bond, committee work to date and potential focal areas for the committee for the coming year. To develop this report back, the committee reviewed parks and nature bond investments, awards and activities compiled in a staff report covering activities through June 2024. The committee organized its review according to topic specific working groups on land acquisition, bond finance and community engagement. The committee has also reviewed findings from the audit of the parks and nature bond focused on how Metro is prepared to increase access to nature through bond investments as well as staff's ongoing work to address the recommendations from the audit.

These two reports are part of the suite of tools Parks and Nature is continuing to strengthen to allow for more meaningful storytelling to multiple audiences on the impact of our work including a bond progress dashboard on the Metro website, quarterly reporting provided to the oversight committee as well as Metro News stories and Our Big Backyard. This fall, Parks and Nature is launching an online storytelling tool that will provide detailed information about the impact of bond investments and activities on desired outcomes in the short, medium and long term on an annual basis.