

Council work session agenda

Tuesday, January 15, 2019

2:00 PM

Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber

2:00 Call to Order and Roll Call

2:05 Chief Operating Officer Communication

Work Session Topics:

2:10 Regional Investment Strategy: Parks and Nature [18-5137](#)

Presenter(s): Jon Blasher, Metro

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)
[Draft Outcomes for Potential Parks and Nature Investments 2019](#)

3:10 Break

3:25 Regional Investment Strategy: Parks and Nature [18-5137](#)

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[Draft Outcomes for Potential Parks and Nature Investments 2019](#)

4:25 Councilor Communication

4:35 Adjourn

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PERSONS DESIGNATED BY THE GOVERNING BODY TO CARRY ON LABOR
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ការគោរពសិទ្ធិពលរដ្ឋរបស់ ។ សំរាប់ព័ត៌មានអំពីកម្មវិធីសិទ្ធិពលរដ្ឋរបស់ Metro ឬដើម្បីទទួលបានកាតបណ្តឹងរើសអើងសូមចូលទស្សនាគេហទំព័រ www.oregonmetro.gov/civilrights។ បើលោកអ្នកត្រូវការអ្នកបកប្រែភាសានៅពេលអង្គប្រជុំសាធារណៈ សូមទូរស័ព្ទមកលេខ 503-797-1700 (ម៉ោង 8 ព្រឹកដល់ម៉ោង 5 ល្ងាច ថ្ងៃធ្វើការ) ប្រាំពីរថ្ងៃ មុនថ្ងៃប្រជុំដើម្បីអាចឲ្យគេសម្រួលតាមសំណើរបស់លោកអ្នក ។

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Regional Investment Strategy: Parks and Nature

Work Session Topics

Metro Council Work Session
Tuesday, January 15, 2018
Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber

REGIONAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY: PARKS AND NATURE BOND OUTCOMES

Date: Jan. 4, 2019

Prepared by: Craig Beebe, x1584,
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Department: Parks and Nature

Presenter: Jon Blasher, Parks & Nature
Director, jon.blasher@oregonmetro.gov

Work session date: Jan. 15, 2019

Length: 60 min

ISSUE STATEMENT

The Metro Council is seeking regional funding to protect and connect nature and people throughout the greater Portland region. The Metro Council has directed staff to develop a potential bond for referral to voters in 2019. At a series of January 2019 work sessions, staff is seeking Council refinement and direction on potential bond outcomes and options to explore through further engagement and technical work.

ACTION REQUESTED

- Jan. 15 work session: Identify Council's desired outcomes for a potential Parks and Nature bond measure
- Jan. 22 work session: Identify possible gaps between Council's desired outcomes and previous bond investment programs
- Jan. 29 work session: Provide guidance to staff on questions, outcomes and investment options to explore through further engagement and technical work this spring, prior to Council consideration of bond measure referral

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

- Build on momentum of past Parks and Nature bond investments, while meeting new challenges, particularly population growth, racial disparity, and climate change
- Advance Parks and Nature System Plan and Metro's work with partners to connect people to nature, protect fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality
- Advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion in bond development, programming and implementation
- Integrate with regional investments in affordable housing and transportation

POLICY QUESTIONS

How should Metro align community needs, conservation priorities and Council's desired outcomes in a Parks and Nature bond measure?

How can bond investments provide direct benefit to the people of greater Portland?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Based on community and partner engagement, Stakeholder Table recommendations and Council input to date, staff have identified the following draft outcomes for potential bond investments. These potential outcomes are further described in an attachment.

- Serve communities through inclusive engagement, transparency and accountability.
- Advance racial equity through bond investments.
- Protect clean water for people, fish and wildlife.
- Protect and restore culturally significant plant communities.
- Protect, connect and improve habitat for native fish and wildlife.
- Take care of what we have.
- Make parks and natural areas more accessible and inclusive.
- Connect more people to the land and rivers of our region.
- Invest in trails for biking and walking.
- Support community-led parks and nature projects.

The Metro Council should further discuss these draft outcomes, as well as any additional outcomes it wishes to consider or direct staff to explore for the potential bond measure.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

In late 2017, the Metro Council directed staff to work with partners and the community on a coordinated regional strategy for potential investments in housing, parks and nature, and transportation, to address the challenges of growth and keep greater Portland livable for everyone. The passage of the regional affordable housing bond in November demonstrates greater Portland voters' eagerness to work together to address these critical issues.

Residents of the region have repeatedly supported investments in parks and nature, an essential element of greater Portland's quality of life and our national reputation. Over the past quarter-century, the region's voters have passed two bond measures that allowed Metro to create a unique regional park system with nature at its heart, in 1995 and 2006. Voters have also passed two levies to care for this system, in 2013 and 2016.

Metro has a strong track record of success delivering on commitments made to voters in these funding measures. With voters' continuing support, Metro has worked with partners to protect clean water, restore fish and wildlife habitat, and bring parks and nature closer to hundreds of thousands of people. Parks and nature investments have made our communities healthier and our economy stronger. Metro now manages 17,000 acres of parks, trails and natural areas across greater Portland, including beloved places like Oxbow and Blue Lake, as well as lesser-known but invaluable natural areas. Thousands more acres of parks and natural areas have are enjoyed by people every day thanks to local and community projects made possible by regional funding.

Although much has been accomplished, there is more to do. A growing population and changing climate threaten the streams and habitat Oregonians have worked so hard to protect. Treasured parks and trails need improvements to keep up with demand. And some

communities – particularly communities of color and other historically marginalized communities – need a more equitable share of the benefits of public investments in parks and nature. The Metro Council adopted a Parks and Nature System Plan in 2016, spelling out Metro’s regional role in addressing these needs with partners and the community.

The Metro Council has directed staff to advance racial equity throughout the development and framework of a potential bond, incorporating lessons learned through past investments, partnerships with community organizations and Metro’s Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. This means including in decision-making those communities that have been left out in the past, as well as looking at how future investments can provide benefits to communities of color and other historically marginalized populations.

BACKGROUND

In fall 2018, Metro engaged a wide range of partners and community members to explore options for a potential bond. Staff conducted focused discussions with members of the conservation community, fellow park providers, Indigenous community members, and farmers to discuss priorities for a potential bond measure, including how it could advance racial equity. Working with a cohort of culturally-specific organizations and conservation groups, Metro also co-hosted two community forums, hearing directly the voices of more than 100 community members who were not included in creating previous Metro parks and nature bond measures.

In September, Metro convened a Stakeholder Table to explore options and provide recommendations to the Metro chief operating officer. Members include roughly 30 people representing perspectives from the conservation community, culturally-specific organizations, business, working lands and local elected officials.

Through the rich insight of these community members and partners, staff identified potential priorities for a third parks and nature bond, as well as ideas that could help a bond meet community and conservation needs in the future. Summaries of this engagement are available in briefing binders supplied to the Metro Council in early January 2019. Staff presented a summary of engagement to date to the Metro Council at an Oct. 11 retreat and Nov. 13 work session.

Since that time, staff have re-engaged key stakeholder groups and jurisdictional partners, including MPAC, to discuss potential bond framework options. A number of stakeholders have also submitted further comments to the Metro Council and/or staff.

As the Metro Council reconvenes with several new councilors, staff seek guidance on the council’s desired outcomes for continuing investments in parks and nature, and what questions or options staff should explore further with partners and the community prior to a potential bond measure referral.

This conversation will be continued over three work sessions. On Jan. 15, the Metro Council will discuss the key outcomes the potential bond measure should prioritize in order to serve the needs of people and nature in greater Portland. On Jan. 22, the Metro Council will

consider possible gaps between Council's desired outcomes and previous parks and nature bond investment programs. On Jan. 29, staff will hear the Metro Council's direction on potential options and concepts to continue exploring with partners and the community in a new potential bond measure.

Staff will return to Metro Council work sessions in the coming months to further explore key policy questions. Staff will also conduct further engagement with the Stakeholder Table, partners and the community to develop potential bond investments and program criteria. The Metro Council could consider referring a bond to voters in the late spring.

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft outcomes for potential 2019 Parks and Nature bond investments
- Is legislation required for Council action? **Yes**
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? **No**

Based on community and partner engagement, Stakeholder Table recommendations and Metro Council input to date, staff have identified the following draft outcomes for potential bond investments, for Metro Council discussion in January 2019.

Serve communities through inclusive engagement, transparency and accountability. Continue to build trust and relationships through engagement of the region's diverse communities in the identification, planning and implementation of Metro-funded projects. Develop tools to evaluate and report on impacts, and adjust course as needed.

Advance racial equity through bond investments. Remove barriers and increase accessible contracting opportunities for COBID contractors and other vulnerable business communities. Set aggressive goals for use of COBID contractors and demonstrate accountability through tracking outcomes and reporting impacts.

Protect clean water for people, fish and wildlife. Update regional land acquisition priorities to increase emphasis on water quantity as well as quality, including protection of headwaters and preventing flooding in urban areas.

Protect and restore culturally significant plant communities. Update regional land acquisition and management plans to prioritize culturally significant plants in partnership with greater Portland's indigenous community. Consider state, federal and regional conservation priorities.

Protect, connect and improve habitat for native fish and wildlife. Update regional land acquisition and management plans to focus on habitat protection for native fish species, such as salmon, trout, steelhead and lamprey. Restore and enhance habitat for wildlife prioritized in state, federal and regional conservation plans and/or identified as priorities through community engagement. Refine natural area protection consistent with Metro's commitment to protecting the agricultural economy and working lands in the greater Portland region.

Take care of what we have. Maintain, update and reinvest in regional and local destinations, particularly those with high visitation and use by communities of color or places/projects identified by communities of color.

Make parks and natural areas more accessible and inclusive. Increase access for those living with disabilities through investments in ADA compliance and projects using universal design principles. Work with communities of color, greater Portland's indigenous community, and other historically marginalized groups to identify opportunities for culturally responsive public improvements.

Connect more people to the land and rivers of our region. Provide people with new or improved access to local rivers and streams, natural areas and places for multi-generational, healing spaces and community gatherings. Leverage other public and private investments in affordable housing and transit.

Invest in trails for biking and walking. Focus on closing gaps and ready-to-build projects that fulfill the Regional Trails Plan, particularly those identified as priorities by communities of color. Consider proximity to affordable housing, transit and connections to regional or local parks.

Support community-led parks and nature projects. Require greater community engagement and racial equity strategies for local, community-led projects funded by the bond. Prioritize projects identified and created by of communities of color and other historically marginalized groups. Hold partners accountable for tracking outcomes and reporting impacts.