

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 22-5285 FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRAILS PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE PARKS AND NATURE BOND COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM

Date: September 29, 2022
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Length: 25 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

In November 2019, voters in greater Portland approved a \$475 million bond measure to continue a three-decade effort to ensure that clean water, healthy fish and wildlife habitat and opportunities for people to connect with nature close to home remain a core part of greater Portland's identity. Thanks to the hard work of community members, partners and staff, the six program areas in the bond are advancing investments to protect the region's special places, support priority projects in communities across the region and ensure Metro sites are safe and welcoming for all.

The bond's walking and biking trails provides up to \$10 million to secure land from willing sellers and \$20 million to plan and build missing trail segments via a competitive grant program for local governments, fulfilling greater Portland's vision for a network of trails where people can relax, exercise and commute.

Staff are presenting for Council consideration and approval a recommended slate of projects for the trail grant funding. This staff report describes how Metro staff solicited grant applications from local governments and used a combination of policy direction, technical information and public input to develop a funding package recommendation for Metro Council approval. Council approval of this recommended slate will allow staff to work with grant recipients to advance these important projects that strengthen the regional trail network through IGA finalization and distribution of funds.

ACTION REQUESTED

Council consideration and approval of Resolution No. 22-5285, For the Purpose of Approving Local Government Trails Projects Funded By the Parks and Nature Bond Competitive Grant Program.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OBJECTIVES

Both the recommended slate of trail projects and the process over the last several months to solicit, review and select these projects are aligned with Council's direction in the bond measure to ensure bond funded programs and projects help advance racial equity, make our region more climate resilient and are built from meaningful community engagement as well as the nine program specific criteria for the walking and biking trails program. Examples of this alignment include:

- The development of an outcomes evaluation that is driven by bond and trail program specific criteria

- Partnering with agency staff and representatives from community-based organizations such as the Community Cycling Center and Oregon Walks to help develop the outcomes evaluation and technical review used to evaluate the projects
- The addition of a cultural resources assessment during the risk assessment phase to understand the potential for Tribal government review of ground disturbing activities
- The inclusion of a tiered structure for local match that provides an advantage to trail projects in higher need communities
- A public comment period, which offered opportunities to provide comment on the projects in five languages and elicited over 1500 comments

Parks and Nature staff will continue to work with grant recipients to ensure that the trail projects continue to advance the bond and program specific criteria.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommend Council approve Resolution No. 22-5285, For the Purpose of Approving Local Government Trails Projects Funded by the Parks and Nature Bond Competitive Grant Program.

BACKGROUND

In alignment with Metro Council direction to use funds efficiently, and make the application process seamless for local jurisdictions, the bond trails grants solicitation and selection processes were merged with the 2025-27 Regional Flexible Funds Allocation (RFFA). The only significant difference between the two processes is that the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) approves the recommended RFFA project list, while the final bond project list is entirely a Metro Council decision. JPACT played an advisory role in developing the bond project list.

In alignment with guidance provided by the trails grant handbook, local agencies submitted 29 applications in February 2022. Applicants were given the option of indicating their preferred funding source: RFFA, Trails Bond, or either source. The total requested amount was \$115,780,513. The following table shows the breakdown of funding category and requests:

Funding Category	Amount	Apps
RFFA	\$ 79,642,888	14
Trails Bond	\$ 9,611,009	7
Either	\$ 26,526,615	8

Selection process and information sources

Reaching a final recommendation for Council consideration on which projects to award funding involved gathering and reviewing the following information sources, along with Council direction provided at two work sessions this past summer.

Outcomes Evaluation –The Outcomes Evaluation is a technical report of the candidate projects’ ability to achieve the region’s investment priorities. Metro Council adopted these priorities through the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and in referring to the ballot the Parks and Nature Bond Measure, which voters approved in 2019. Subsequently, a

work group comprised of agency staff and community based organization representatives provided input to the development of performance measures and assisted in creation of the Outcomes Evaluation report.

The Outcomes Evaluation uses four criteria areas – Equity, Safety, Climate and Trails – to score the bond project proposals in comparison with each. These criteria are based on the walking and biking trail program criteria and the 2018 RTP investment priorities. Each criteria area was weighted equally for the purposes of the Outcomes Evaluation.

Risk Assessment – Following practice established for the 2022-2024 RFFA, Metro hired Kittelson and Associates to conduct a risk assessment of the project proposals. This evaluation measured the thoroughness of projects’ scoping, timeline and budget, and identified any associated risks to the project being completed as indicated in the proposal. The initial risk assessment findings were shared with applicants, providing them the opportunity to amend their proposal accordingly.

Public Comment – A 30-day public comment period concluded on June 21 provided the opportunity for members of the public, community organizations and local jurisdictions to provide insights and information beyond that included in the project application materials and to demonstrate support for specific projects. Metro received over 1,550 responses via a multi-lingual online survey tool, with more responses coming in via letter or email.

Coordinating Committee Prioritization – Coordinating committees received several updates on this process and meet multiple times to identify which of the projects submitted from their represented jurisdictions were their sub-region’s priorities to be considered for funding and articulated additional project benefits they believe were not adequately captured by the Outcomes Evaluation.