

STAFF REPORT

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 18-4881, FOR THE PURPOSE OF AUTHORIZING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO APPROVE THE EXCHANGE OF METRO OWNED LAND ON GOVERNMENT ISLAND FOR PORT OF PORTLAND OWNED LAND IN SMITH AND BYBEE WETLANDS

Date: June 14, 2018

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GOVERNMENT ISLAND

Metro owns approximately 200 acres of real property on Government Island in the Columbia River that was acquired with funds from the 1995 open spaces bond measure in order to protect riparian habitat and bring the entire island into public ownership. Access to this land is limited, time consuming and possible only by boat. For these reasons Metro has not prioritized funding to restore and maintain the acquisition. The Port of Portland manages the remaining 2,000 acres of Government Island to benefit fish and wildlife habitat.

The Port has worked with environmental consultants to develop conceptual restoration plans for the Jewett Lake area of the island, directly adjacent to the Metro-owned acres. The project will have improved benefits to fish and wildlife habitat, specifically to native juvenile salmonids, if restoration work could be completed and include the acres currently owned by Metro. Metro desires to convey the acres under its ownership to the Port of Portland so that the Port can maximize the benefits of those acres to fish and wildlife habitat and maintain the land consistent with its ownership on the rest of the island.

SMITH AND BYBEE WETLANDS

At nearly 2,000 acres, Metro's Smith and Bybee Wetlands Natural Area is one of the largest protected wetlands within an American city. Surrounded on all sides by industrial development, it provides essential habitat for rare plants and a suite of wildlife, from sensitive species, such as the Western painted turtle, bald eagle and migrating songbirds, to ubiquitous species, such as raccoons, striped skunks and robins. Metro has been managing the majority of land in Smith and Bybee Wetlands for the benefit of fish and wildlife habitat and visitor enjoyment dating back to 1990. The original plan for the area implemented a management framework, provided the funding, and instituted the processes needed to begin restoration of the wetlands. In 2011, an updated Comprehensive Natural Resource Management Plan was adopted setting the course to protect and enhance the area as an environmental and recreational resource for the region for the next seven to ten years.

The Port of Portland owns approximately 280 acres of real property in the Smith and Bybee Wetlands Management Area. Metro is the manager of most of the remainder of the nearly 2,000 acres that make up Smith and Bybee Wetlands. The Port desires to convey its acres to Metro for ownership and management, consistent with the Comprehensive Natural Resource Management and Metro's management of the site.

ANALYSIS/INFORMATION

1. Known Opposition

None.

2. Legal Antecedents

1995 Metro Open Spaces Bond Measure approved by voters on May 16, 1995.

Metro Code Section 2.04.050(b), which requires Metro Council authorization for the Chief Operator to transfer interests in real property.

ORS 271.300 to 271.360, which allows disposition or exchange of real property in furtherance of the public interest.

3. Anticipated Effects

Adoption of this Resolution will allow Metro to acquire land in Smith and Bybee Wetland and dispose of land on Government Island to benefit fish and wildlife habitat and improve water quality.

4. Budget Impacts

None; this is an even exchange.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Chief Operating Officer recommends approval of Resolution 18-4881