

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION 21-5155, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPOINTING
A NEW NATURAL AREAS AND CAPITAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE

Date: February 22, 2021
Department: Parks and Nature
Meeting Date: February 25, 2021

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Length: 15 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Independent community oversight has been essential to Metro's accountability and delivery on promises made to voters in its funding measures. The establishment of the Natural Areas and Capital Program Performance Oversight Committee provides an opportunity to meet a high standard for inclusive, equitable community oversight.

The purpose of Resolution No. 21-5155 is to appoint individuals to serve on the Natural Areas and Capital Program Performance Oversight Committee for the 2019 Parks and Nature bond.

The purpose of this committee is to provide independent program oversight on behalf of the Metro Council to ensure that the committee will keep Metro accountable and transparent in its use of capital funds from the \$475 million 2019 parks and nature bond, the parks and natural areas local option levy and any remaining funds from the 2006 natural areas bond.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff requests approval of Resolution No. 21-5155 to appoint individuals to serve on the Natural Areas and Capital Program Performance Oversight Committee.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

On November 5, 2019, Greater Portland voters overwhelmingly approved a \$475 million Metro parks and nature bond measure with the following program areas and allocations:

- Protect and restore land (\$155 million)
- Support local projects – “Local Share” (\$92 million)
- Nature in Neighborhood capital grants (\$40 million)
- Take care of Metro parks (\$98 million)
- Create trails for walking and biking (\$40 million)
- Advance large-scale community visions (\$50 million)

The Metro Council identified 11 foundational principles to guide the bond's investments and implementation including:

- 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 native 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.
- Make communities more resilient to climate change.

The bond resolution includes three overarching themes—advancing racial equity, climate resilience and community engagement. In addition, the bond resolution refers to a future oversight committee

“An independent community advisory committee will review progress in the implementation of Metro’s bond measure, including protection of land, local and community project implementation, capital construction of Metro park and regional trail projects, and grant program administration. This committee, the Natural Areas and Capital Program Performance Oversight Committee, gives the Metro Council and the region’s residents an independent, outside review of the capital program. The committee’s charge and responsibilities will include oversight of Metro’s efforts to meet the racial equity and climate resiliency criteria and outcomes described in this measure.”

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Metro Council approve Resolution No. 21-5155 to appoint individuals to serve on the Natural Areas and Capital Program Performance Oversight Committee.

BACKGROUND

At an October 1 2020 work session, Metro Council provided direction on a structure for a 2019 parks and nature bond oversight committee. Council emphasized the following considerations when establishing a committee and recruiting members:

- Committee members should bring a deep understanding of conservation values and be committed to racial equity
- Committee members should bring multiple complementary backgrounds and knowledge across a range of topics including conservation, habitat and biodiversity, finance, working lands, understanding of the disability community and the urban Indigenous community and of issues around tribal sovereignty, to name a few.

- Committee members should reflect the diversity and geography of the region and allow for a diversity of perspectives on Metro and its work.

In October 2020, staff launched a broad recruitment process, sharing the opportunity with many organizations and individuals across the region. Over 110 applications were submitted from a diverse set of passionate and qualified individuals across the region. Staff reviewed these applications according to the aforementioned set of values determined by the Metro Council and provided those considerations to the Council for deliberation.

Council has approved a list of 19 individuals to serve on the committee that have met requirements for membership set by Council last fall. In addition, the Council President has appointed Councilors to serve as liaisons to the committee. Staff expects the committee to begin meeting in March and to focus first on onboarding to build a shared understanding of the bond program areas and the bond-wide criteria around racial equity, climate resilience and community engagement.

In the coming months, Parks and Nature staff will work with the Council to identify a set of outcomes through which to measure success for the 2019 parks and nature bond based on the principles and criteria listed in the bond resolution. Once the Metro Council confirms these outcomes, the oversight committee can begin to use them for evaluating bond progress.

On February 11, the Metro Council heard the first read of ordinance number 21-1460 to amend the Metro code to establish the oversight committee for the 2019 Parks and Nature bond measure. The ordinance establishes in the Metro Code will articulate the purpose, authority, size and focus and terms of membership, and meeting frequency for the committee. The language affirms that a chair or co-chairs will be designated by the Council President. At the February 25 meeting, Council will vote to approve this ordinance to amend the code to establish the Natural Areas and Capital Program Performance Oversight Committee.

ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit A to the resolution (list of members for appointment)