

2019 PARKS AND NATURE BOND: LOCAL SHARE UPDATE

Date: March 16, 2021
Department: Parks and Nature
Meeting Date: March 30, 2020

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ISSUE STATEMENT

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 bond refinement process, underway now, will clarify processes for investing bond funds through the six bond program areas in the bond legislation. The purpose of this work session is to provide an update on the local share program and to seek Council feedback on questions related to implementation of the program.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff is requesting the Metro Council affirm a proposed approach to local share program implementation so the work can continue to allow for the 27 park providers in the region slated to receive local share funding to move forward with the identification and submission of priority projects in their communities when they are ready to do so.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The local share program allocates funds to each of the 27 park providers in the region for projects in their communities that align with the bond and program criteria in the parks and nature bond legislation. Specifically, in engaging their communities to select and implement priority projects, park providers must satisfy required bond program community engagement, racial equity and climate resilience criteria as well as meet program criteria and eligibility guidelines.

The Metro Council has set policy direction for the local share program through the bond resolution, which establishes the bond-wide principles and criteria as well as local share program criteria and requirements. Staff are working to implement the policy direction through the development of local share program materials, which include a program

handbook, a submission package and a set of tools and resources to support park providers in meeting the bond and program criteria.

An intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between Metro and each of the 27 park providers will formalize park providers' commitment to implementing these projects in alignment with the direction in the bond legislation and once approved, launch the distribution of funding for projects.

Staff are responding to the following direction from the Metro Council and feedback from park providers related to the implementation of the local share program:

- Support park providers in advancing priority projects in their communities
- Support park providers in using local share funds to advance bond criteria around racial equity, community engagement and climate resilience
- Build public support for the bond by highlighting successful local share projects

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

At the March 30 work session, staff will highlight key elements of the local share program handbook and describe in more detail how the local share program handbook, submittal package and IGAs with park providers will provide direction and structure to establish that park providers have met the bond criteria by:

- Documenting meaningful engagement with communities of color, Indigenous communities and other historically marginalized communities in planning, development and selection of projects;
- Setting aspirational goals for workforce diversity and use of certified contractors either by utilizing local jurisdictions' existing policies and/or making strides to implement new contracting and workforce equity practices in their communities
- Selecting projects that meet the threshold of protecting and connecting to nature and building communities' climate resiliency

In addition, at the March 30th work session, staff will seek Council direction on an approach to the process of finalizing IGAs with each park provider and disbursing local share dollars.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends a streamlined path for approval of IGAs with the 27 park providers that would allow for expeditious distribution of funds for priority projects across the region that protect clean water, restore habitat and connect people with nature close to home.

This process would be triggered by park providers submitting one or multiple priority projects as early as May 2021. Park providers will rely on program materials developed by parks and nature staff to guide which projects they submit and the process they use to describe their current or future work. Metro staff will review projects and processes submitted and upon approval of submitted projects, can begin IGA negotiation discussions with park providers.

Staff is recommending that the Metro Council subsequently approve an IGA template that reflects Council's direction and delegate authority to the Metro Chief Operating Officer (COO) to execute the final IGA negotiated with each park provider (which includes approving each park provider's projects), provided the IGA is substantially similar to the Council-approved IGA template or as otherwise approved by the Metro Attorney.

This work session is intended to outline the local share program materials and a proposed IGA approval process. After Council provides direction on the overall approach at the March 30 work session, staff will be prepared to review with Council the IGA template in more detail in advance of Council's formal adoption.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

How does the approach to local share program implementation align with Council's expectations?

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Operationalizing Council's policy direction: The Metro Council established the policy direction for the local share program through the parks and nature bond legislation. Council's affirmation at the March 30 work session that the overall approach of program materials advances Council's policy direction will allow staff to develop tools to formalize park providers' commitment to fulfilling this direction, such as the IGA template.

In the past, the Metro Council has delegated authority to the COO to take operational actions Council is otherwise required to approve. For example, the Metro Code requires Council to approve any contract for the purchase, sale, lease or transfer of real property, but for property acquired under the 2006 Natural Areas Bond Measure, Council has delegated authority to the COO to enter into purchase agreements provided such acquisitions are in accordance with the Council-approved Work Plan.

Coordination across parks and nature bond programs: The development of local share program materials has been informed by and will inform other programs in the parks and nature bond. The guidance and tools being developed and shared with park providers will be utilized in implementing the programs in the parks and nature bond.

Variety across local share program recipients: There are 27 park providers slated to receive local share dollars from the parks and nature bond that are eager to invest these funds. These park providers diverge in allocation amount, size of jurisdictions, readiness to implement and type of projects planned. The local share program approach is intended to provide overall guidance while allowing for local flexibility to demonstrate how program and bond criteria are met with project planning and prioritization.

Importance of local share progress to overall bond success: The implementation of the local share program is an opportunity to support and see tangible results from this bond

measure in communities across the region. Parks and nature staff can provide regular updates on project submission and highlight the important and innovative local share projects through updates at Council meetings and news stories on Metro's website. In addition, park providers will also be responsible for reporting outcomes to Metro that nest within the overall evaluation measures of bond progress to be developed.

BACKGROUND

The 2019 parks and nature bond includes the local share program, in which Metro will distribute up to \$92 million in bond funds to cities, counties and other park providers across greater Portland to protect land, restore habitat, and build and care for parks that connect people to nature in local communities.

Bond measure funds will be provided directly to local cities, counties and park districts in existence as of June 6, 2019, on a per capita basis, to protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat or connect people to nature.

Eligible local share bond investments are as follows:

- Natural areas or park land acquisition
- Fish and wildlife habitat restoration, habitat connectivity enhancements
- Maintaining or developing public access facilities at public parks and natural areas
- Design and construction of local or regional trails
- Enhanced or new learning/environmental educational facilities

ATTACHMENTS

- Is legislation required for Council action? ☐ Yes x ☐ No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- What other materials are you presenting today?