



May 2021

Willamette Cove 101: Community engagement

Background: In December 2020, Metro Council passed a resolution to make Willamette Cove eligible for funding through 2019 Parks and Nature bond. Included in the resolution was a plan for meaningful public engagement to identify community priorities for future passive recreational opportunities and trail development at Willamette Cove. This is separate from but linked to the plan for tribal engagement at Willamette Cove.

What is meaningful community engagement? Meaningful community engagement is a response to historical and contemporary racial and other oppressions perpetuated by institutions and individuals with political, social and economic power. The inherent purpose of community engagement is to address these injustices by redistributing decision-making power to Black, indigenous and other people of color and other historically marginalized communities. For community engagement to live up to this purpose, racial equity needs to be embedded throughout each phase of the cycle to ensure that the voices of impacted communities will substantially change the final outcome of a project.

Where are we now? Metro staff members are currently working on a plan to collaborate with community members in the Willamette Cove decision-making process. Effective community engagement requires clear sideboards so all participants know what is and isn't possible in a project — because of the complicated nature of the Willamette Cove site, including the separate upland and in-water cleanup plans, it will likely be years before those sideboards are in place and the community engagement process can begin.

What happens next? Staff will present a plan for meaningful community engagement to Metro Council in July of 2021. In the meantime, project team members are available to discuss Willamette Cove with community members, listen to concerns and answer any questions they may have.

How can I learn more? Individuals or groups interested in community engagement can contact Matan Gold (matan.gold@oregonmetro.gov), Metro's Willamette Cove community engagement specialist, or Kelsey Wallace (kelsey.wallace@oregonmetro.gov), Metro's Willamette Cove communications coordinator, for additional information.