

# Chapter 3

## Nature in Neighborhoods

**REGIONAL FRAMEWORK PLAN  
CHAPTER 3 NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS**

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## Chapter 3 Nature in Neighborhoods

### Introduction

The Metro Charter, approved by the region's voters in 1992, authorizes Metro to acquire, develop, maintain, and operate a system of parks, open space, and recreational facilities of metropolitan concern. This chapter of the Regional Framework Plan outlines the policies that guide Metro in providing these services and outlines Metro's roles and responsibilities. These policies include the inventory, protection, management and use of these resources at the regional and local levels. The policies have been derived from the Greenspaces Master Plan, the Regional Urban Growth Goals and Objectives (RUGGOs), the Future Vision Report, recommendations from the Metropolitan Policy Advisory Committee, the Greenspaces Technical Advisory Committee, and from citizens of the region.

The importance of the region's natural landscape and its recreation facilities cannot be understated. They support the air we breathe, the water we drink and define the look and feel of our communities. They ensure that natural resources and habitats are protected and that citizens have recreational opportunities close to where they work and live.

Citizens throughout the region have demonstrated the importance of parks, natural areas, trails and recreation services through their support of funding measures, participation in recreational activities and volunteer community service and from what they have said in public opinion surveys. Metro recognizes the desire of citizens to have high-quality natural areas, trails and parks close to home. Metro is working with federal, state and local governments, non-profit organizations and citizens to address and meet the park and recreation needs of the Portland metropolitan area.

### Policies

#### 3.1 Inventory of Park Facilities and Identification and Inventory of Regionally Significant Parks, Natural Areas, Open Spaces, Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Trails and Greenways

It is the policy of the Metro Council to:

- 3.1.1 Ensure coordinated protection and enhancement of natural functions such as water quality and wildlife habitat across jurisdictional boundaries by inventorying and identifying regionally significant parks, natural areas, open spaces, fish and wildlife habitat, vacant lands, trails and greenways at the watershed level using topographical, geologic and biologic functions and features, i.e., "landscape ecology."
- 3.1.2 Identify natural corridors that connect regionally significant parks, natural areas, open spaces, fish and wildlife habitat, trails and greenways. River and stream corridors, ridgelines, butte-tops, utility corridors, abandoned roads, and railroad rights-of-way will provide primary linkages.

- 3.1.3 Inventory lands outside the Urban Growth Boundary and Metro's jurisdictional boundary and identify them as prospective components of the Regional System when protection of these lands is determined to be of direct benefit to the region.
- 3.1.4 Identify urban areas which are deficient in natural areas and identify opportunities for acquisition and restoration.
- 3.1.5 Update the parks inventory (first completed in 1988) every five (5) years, including acreage, facilities, environmental education programs, cultural resources, existing school sites and other information as determined by Metro.
- 3.1.6 Inventory the urban forestry canopy, using appropriate landscape level techniques, such as remote sensing or aerial photo interpretation, on a periodic basis and provide inventory information to local jurisdictions.

**3.2 Protection of Regionally Significant Parks, Natural Areas, Open Spaces, Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Trails and Greenways**

It is the policy of the Metro Council to:

- 3.2.1 Continue developing a Regional System of Parks, Natural Areas, Open Spaces, Fish and Wildlife Habitats, Trails, and Greenways (the Regional System) to achieve the following objectives:
  - a. Protect the region's biodiversity;
  - b. Provide citizens opportunities for, primarily, natural resource dependent recreation and education;
  - c. Contribute to the protection of air and water quality and watershed health; and
  - d. Provide natural buffers and connections between communities.
- 3.2.2 Finance and coordinate protection and management of the Regional System across jurisdictional boundaries upon the advice of citizens, and in coordination with local governments and state and federal resource agencies and appropriate non-profit organizations.
- 3.2.3 Use strategies to protect and manage the Regional System including, but not limited to, acquisition, education, incentives, land use and environmental regulations. Implement these strategies regionally and coordinate and encourage these strategies to be implemented by local governments, special districts, businesses, non-profit organizations, and individuals.
- 3.2.4 Include lands inside and outside the UGB and Metro's jurisdiction in the Regional System when protection of these lands are determined to be of direct benefit to the region.

- 3.2.5 Collect and evaluate baseline data related to natural resource values of the Regional System to identify trends and to guide management decisions.
- 3.2.6 Seek to avoid fragmentation and degradation of components of the Regional System caused by new transportation and utility projects. If avoidance is infeasible, impacts shall be minimized and mitigated.
- 3.2.7 Work with the State of Oregon to update, reinvigorate and implement a Willamette River Greenway Plan for the metropolitan region, in conjunction with affected local governments.
- 3.2.8 Protect Fish and Wildlife Habitat to achieve the following objectives:
  - a. Performance objectives:
    - i) Preserve and improve streamside, wetland, and floodplain habitat and connectivity;
    - ii) Preserve large areas of contiguous habitat and avoid habitat fragmentation;
    - iii) Preserve and improve connectivity for wildlife between riparian corridors and upland wildlife habitat; and
    - iv) Preserve and improve special habitat of concern, including native oak habitats, native grasslands, wetlands, bottomland hardwood forests, and riverine islands.
  - b. Implementation objectives:
    - i) Increase the use of habitat-friendly development throughout the region; and
    - ii) Increase restoration and mitigation actions to compensate for adverse effects of new and existing development on ecological function.

**3.3 Management of the Publicly-Owned Portion of the Regional System of Parks, Natural Areas, Open Spaces, Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Trails and Greenways**

It is the policy of the Metro Council to:

- 3.3.1 Assume management responsibility for elements of the publicly owned portion of the Regional System, as outlined in a functional plan to be developed.
- 3.3.2 Assume financial responsibility related to those portions of the publicly owned system which are managed by Metro.

- 3.3.3 Give local governments an opportunity to transfer existing publicly owned components of the Regional System to Metro and to acquire components of the Regional System with local resources.
- 3.3.4 Manage the publicly owned portion of the Regional System to protect fish, wildlife, and botanic values and to provide, primarily, natural resource dependent recreational and educational opportunities.
- 3.3.5 Acquire portions of the Regional System as financial resources allow by negotiating with willing sellers and using the power of eminent domain only in extraordinary circumstances.
- 3.3.6 Insure that public use is compatible with natural and cultural resource protection for components of the Regional System by creating Master/Management plans that strive to achieve that objective prior to formal public use.
- 3.3.7 Be responsive to recreation demands and trends identified in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), along with local government cooperators in the Regional System.
- 3.3.8 Develop master planning guidelines to assure consistency in the management of the Regional System.
- 3.3.9 Convene local government park providers to share information, review and analyze issues from time to time or in conjunction with the periodic update of the region-wide parks inventory and, if appropriate, develop recommendations related to:
  - a. Roles and responsibilities
  - b. Funding
  - c. Levels of service
  - d. Information needs
  - e. User trends and preferences
  - f. Technical assistance
  - g. Interagency coordination
  - h. Public involvement
  - i. Other topics as determined by Metro and local park providers

- 3.3.10 Pursue the identification and implementation of a long-term, stable funding source to support the planning, acquisition, development, management and maintenance of the Regional System in cooperation with local governments.

#### **3.4 Protection, Establishment and Management of a Regional Trails System**

It is the policy of the Metro Council to:

- 3.4.1 Identify a Regional Trails System which shall be included in the Regional Transportation Plan.
- 3.4.2 Provide access to publicly owned parks, natural areas, open spaces, and greenways, where appropriate via the Regional Trails System.
- 3.4.3 Coordinate planning for the Regional Trails System with local governments, federal and state agencies, utility providers, and appropriate non-profit organizations.
- 3.4.4 Cooperate with citizens and other trail providers to identify and secure funding for development and operation of the Regional Trails System.
- 3.4.5 Encourage local governments to integrate local and neighborhood trail systems with the Regional Trails System.

#### **3.5 Provision of Community and Neighborhood Parks, Open Spaces, Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Natural Areas, Trails and Recreation Programs**

It is the policy of the Metro Council to:

- 3.5.1 Recognize that local governments remain responsible for the planning and provision of community and neighborhood parks, local open spaces, natural areas, sports fields, recreational centers, trails, and associated programs within their jurisdictions.
- 3.5.2 Encourage local governments to (i) adopt level of service standards for provision of parks, natural areas, trails, and recreational facilities in their local comprehensive plans; and (ii) locate and orient such parks, open spaces, natural areas, trails, etc., to the extent practical, in a manner which promotes non-vehicular access.
- 3.5.3 Encourage local governments to be responsive to recreation demand trends identified in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
- 3.5.4 Encourage local governments to develop, adopt and implement Master Plans for local parks and trail systems, natural areas, and recreational programs.
- 3.5.5 Work in cooperation with local governments, state government, and private industry to establish a supplemental funding source for parks and open spaces acquisition, operations and maintenance.

- 3.5.6 Encourage local governments to identify opportunities for cooperation and cost efficiencies with non-profit organizations, other governmental entities, and local school districts.
- 3.5.7 Require that no urban reserve areas be brought into the UGB unless the Urban Reserve master plans demonstrate that planning requirements for the acquisition and protection of regionally significant fish and wildlife habitat and adequate land to meet or exceed locally adopted levels of service standards for the provision of public parks, natural areas, trails, and recreational facilities, be adopted in the local comprehensive plans.
- 3.5.8 Develop a functional plan in cooperation with local governments establishing the criteria which local governments address in adopting a locally determined “level of service standard,” establishing region-wide goals for the provision of parks and open spaces in various urban design types identified in the 2040 Growth Concept and applying this to the portion of the region within the UGB and the urban reserves within Metro’s jurisdiction when urban reserve conceptual plans are approved.
- 3.5.9 Work with local governments to promote a broader understanding of the importance of open spaces to the success of the 2040 Growth Concept and develop tools to assess open spaces on a parity with jobs, housing, and transportation targets in the Regional Framework Plan.

**3.6 Participation of Citizens in Environmental Education, Planning, Stewardship Activities, and Recreational Services.**

It is the policy of the Metro Council to:

- 3.6.1 Encourage public participation in natural, cultural and recreation resource management decisions related to the Regional System.
- 3.6.2 Provide educational opportunities to enhance understanding, enjoyment and informed use of natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
- 3.6.3 Provide and promote opportunities for the public to engage in stewardship activities on publicly owned natural resource lands and encourage cooperative efforts between Metro and private non-profit groups, community groups, schools and other public agencies.
- 3.6.4 Provide opportunities for technical assistance to private landowners for stewardship of components of the Regional System.
- 3.6.5 Work together with local governments with state, federal, non-profit and private partners to facilitate stewardship and educational opportunities on publicly owned natural resource lands.
- 3.6.6 Encourage local governments to provide opportunities for public involvement in the planning and delivery of recreational facilities and services.

**3.6.7 Follow and promote the citizen participation values inherent in Policy 1.13 and the Metro Citizen Involvement Principles.**

(RFP Chapter 3 renamed from “Parks, Natural Areas, Open Spaces Trails & Recreational Facilities” to “Nature in Neighborhoods”; updated Policy Titles and Policy Nos. 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.1, 3.2.3, 3.2.5, 3.5.7 and 3.6.7; added Policy No. 3.2.8; 9/29/05, Metro Ord. 05-1077C.)