

Parks and nature bond

Phase one engagement summary | October 2018



Metro staff was directed by Metro Council in the spring of 2018 to begin shaping a potential parks and nature bond measure for the November 2019 ballot. Using both the parks and nature system plan and Metro's strategy to advance racial equity, Metro staff created an engagement strategy that would elevate the voices of communities of color while also continuing to tap into the deep knowledge of the conservation advocates and park providers throughout the region.

The engagement goals for this outreach are:

- Respond to community needs
- Elevate communities of color
- Advance racial equity
- Strengthen awareness and trust in Metro
- Stronger relationships between organizations
- Report back to community

A targeted approach to engagement was used to help Metro's Chief Operating Officer prepare a framework for parks and nature bond investments. A unique strategy was created for each of five stakeholder groups:

- Conservation advocates
- Local park providers
- Culturally specific and other historically marginalized communities
- Working lands stakeholders
- Urban indigenous communities

The five reports summarizing the input received through these efforts are attached. Common priorities and concerns among stakeholder groups offer direction to both the framework of what the parks and nature bond can fund and how this work can advance racial equity. In addition, each group had unique viewpoints to offer that can help identify unique opportunities for investments and impacts.

Consistent funding priorities

Discussions uncovered both support for these priorities as well as concerns about how to assure that funding will have the intended impacts without creating more disparities.

Protecting land

Clean water: Protecting clean water was strongly emphasized at the forums with historically marginalized community members, Indigenous communities, conservation advocates and working lands interviewees. There was recognition of the interconnectedness of the work needed to support healthy habitats for fish and resilient communities for people. From the protection of headwaters to instream and riparian areas to floodplains, people across the board expressed the importance of clean water.

Protecting rare habitats: This priority came up less than clean water, but it was discussed as important within the conservation, Indigenous and working lands communities.

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Capital investments at Metro sites

Take care of what we have: This is an important theme that came out of the community forums. Participants see the need to address deferred maintenance and ADA accessibility improvements in order to make sure our existing destinations can best serve culturally specific and other historically marginalized communities. The Indigenous community is looking for spaces that support larger gatherings, multi-generational access and healing spaces. They are looking for such spaces on any Metro managed site.

Fulfilling the vision for new nature parks: This work came up less than taking care of existing nature parks. However, there was support for the approach of working closely with community to develop and fulfill a vision for new parks.

Local share

Building capacity and empowering community to lead: There is a difference in opinion on how local share can be used to address local needs. The culturally specific, historically marginalized and Indigenous communities feel that these funds need to support community-based projects that build people's relationships with the land and with nature. Many local park providers would rather use these funds to advance what they see as important park and nature investments that can address the needs of their entire constituency as defined in park system plans and master plans.

Repair and replacement: Park providers are also interested in repair and replacement of facilities and infrastructure in existing parks. This is consistent with the requests from culturally significant and historically marginalized communities to take care of what we have first.

Capital grants

There is strong support for the capital grant program to support community-based projects. People see opportunities to build stronger relationships with nature that can encourage people to visit natural areas further and further from their neighborhoods. Conservation groups support increased funding in capital grants to leverage community capacity and build stronger relationships.

Themes associated with racial equity

While all the groups see racial equity as important, the depth of understanding on the opportunities within the parks and nature profession varied. There is interest across the board in better understanding the problem and opportunities, and pursuing continued community engagement as a way forward.

Impact of bond investments: The question about the impact of bond investments (both past and future) on racial equity came up in a few different contexts. There is interest in using some form of impact analysis to identify metrics or approaches that the local share can use to advance racial equity.

Both historically marginalized and conservation communities raised questions about how past local share investments may have perpetuated disparities. There is a desire to understand the impacts of existing practices to design solutions.

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Working lands participants were concerned about the impact Metro's land acquisition program is having on the value of farm land.

Engagement: Across the board, feedback reflected the desire to be more engaged in decision making about the bond and the bond investments early and throughout the decision making processes. All expressed gratitude for the tailored approaches and feel invested in the decision. There was a consistent desire to support the capacity of communities of color and other historically marginalized communities in planning for, designing and implementing projects.

Improve access to nature for underserved communities: While the support for this topic was consistent across most groups, the approaches and concerns shed light on the complexity of achieving this outcome. First, proximity of a park or natural area to underserved communities does not address the issue of access. Accessibility is a complex issue that needs to be taken into account throughout planning efforts, design development, construction and programming. Approaches widely supported by historically marginalized communities included investing first in existing nature parks and addressing universal accessibility issues, including ADA accessibility. Their input was consistent with local park providers, who are looking for more resources to address degrading infrastructure in existing parks.

Connect outcomes for multiple benefits: There was a consistent recognition that coordination between various interest groups and work functions could surface opportunities for greater impacts. For example, working lands participants see potential in a project that preserves farm land and advances conservation while providing public access and education. At the community forum, participants saw linkages in acquiring and restoring floodplains and river banks with the opportunity to engage Indigenous communities throughout the process.

Coordinate with other investment packages: Every stakeholder group voiced the need to coordinate investments in affordable housing, transportation and parks and nature. There is awareness of the continual, long-term shift of populations due to the forces of gentrification. This also elevated the importance of increasing capacity for culturally specific organizations to work across issues to create thriving communities.

Unique perspectives

Conservation advocates: Protect land inside and outside the urban growth boundary; prioritize habitat connectivity, rare habitats and species like oak and prairie.

Local park providers: Prioritize trails, local park improvements, land acquisition, and renewal and replacement. Would like increased investment in the local share and value flexibility.

Culturally specific and other historically marginalized communities: Concerned about displacement and how the economic forces that drive gentrification can be addressed when investing in parks and nature.

Working lands stakeholders: Minimize impacts to neighboring farmers and keep the most productive farmland in farming.

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Urban indigenous communities: Invest in park improvements that will rejuvenate cultural practices.

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Conservation engagement report | Fall 2018



Completed by: Jonathan Soll, Science Manager, Metro Parks and Nature Department

Audience overview: Conservation organizations have been important partners in shaping Metro's parks and nature system and helping carry out projects over the past three decades. Thirty conversations were held with organizations we considered conservation-oriented, including nonprofits (10), watershed councils (9), soil and water conservation districts (4), water treatment providers (3), state and federal natural resource agencies (3), and tribal government natural resource departments (1). This group specifically excluded park providers, who were interviewed as part of the local jurisdiction group by other Metro staff. A list of organizations and staff with whom we have met to date follows as Attachment 1.

Conversations are still pending with other tribal natural resource departments and Willamette Riverkeeper.

Engagement format: Conversations were held between Jonathan Soll, Metro's Parks and Nature Department Science Division Manager, and representatives of the given organization. Most meetings were one-on-one or in small groups, typically with senior staff and one or two board members. Conversations with the Tryon Creek Watershed Council and the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services were in a roundtable format with many participants. Conversations with soil and water conservation districts and watershed councils do not represent formal positions of those organizations, but in each case the manager or executive director conferred with their board or brought individual board members to provide insight into the issues of concern to the organization.

Conversations started with Jonathan explaining capital vs. non-capital expenses, providing an overview of the history of the bond program and Metro's commitment to integrating diversity, equity and inclusion goals into a potential future measure, before proceeding to explore the organization's opinion of past efforts and needs for the future (see conversation guide that follows this summary as Attachment 2). Jonathan then guided each organization through a conversation about major investment and conservation themes, as well as any geographic priorities, with consideration given to how Metro might adapt our priorities and criteria and integrate our capital investment initiatives.

Engagement point people: Jonathan Soll held all discussions.

Overview:

- There was unanimity that Metro's investment in land conservation through the previous bond measures has played a unique and vital role in the region ecologically, socially and economically. Ideas for future investment strategy, criteria and focus varied in the details with the perspective of the organization, but all organizations embraced the current three general categories of investment: Metro, local share and capital grants. All but one organization (Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District) strongly supports Metro asking voters for additional capital funding.

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- Many organizations had only partial understanding of the capital vs. non-capital issue or how past bond investments have been used throughout the region. Most organizations over-estimated the percentage of past investment outside the urban growth boundary.
- All groups agree that a regional approach to protecting water quality, wildlife habitat and meaningful access to nature close to home should remain core elements of a future bond measure.
- Twenty-eight of 30 groups strongly support land acquisition inside and outside the urban growth boundary. Groups rooted firmly in the urban core such as the Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Greater Oregon City Watershed Council, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, North Clackamas Urban Watershed Council or Portland Bureau of Environmental Services emphasized continued investment inside the boundary and integrating habitat conservation with park access, trails and storm-water management. Regionally focused groups such as the Clackamas River Watershed Council, Columbia Land Trust, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Sandy River Watershed Council and The Nature Conservancy particularly value Metro's unique regional role in protecting and managing larger landscapes. Although the West Multnomah County and Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation Districts staff reflected concerns from some members of their boards about acquisition outside the urban growth boundary and the fate of agricultural lands, they both hoped that protection of agricultural land through the soil and water conservation districts could be a future strategy and that capital investment via Metro was positive overall. The Clackamas and East Multnomah districts unequivocally saw Metro as a strong ally in such efforts, which could be integrated with more typical conservation approaches. Water quality providers Clackamas Water and Environment Services, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, and Washington County Clean Water Services all embrace the partnership, leverage and catalytic power of Metro capital investment to expand their ability to deliver projects with multiple benefits to their communities.

Major themes included:

- Get and stay ahead of rapid growth
- Improve habitat, ecosystem service provision and access to nature in developed areas
- Implement habitat and species priorities of the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Regional Conservation Strategy.
- Conserve rivers, streams and their floodplains for habitat, water quality (for animals and people), flood control, and regional connectivity
- Habitat connectivity is important at all geographic scales, especially to address climate change
- Connect neighborhoods to parks, ideally with non-motorized options
- The dichotomy of nature or people is false; protecting nature protects people.
- Access is important, but not all areas should have access and there are many benefits to people other than access
- Urban conservation should often be integrated with access
- Metro funding is often a catalytic element of projects led by partners and community organizations and is a practically irreplaceable asset for leveraging other funds
- Our regulatory framework assumes investment from bonds as a core strategy for healthy nature

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- Exploring opportunities to integrate investment in transportation, housing and nature is a good idea.

Key priorities identified for potential bond measure:

- Protect land both inside and outside the urban growth boundary
- Protect and restore habitat connectivity at multiple scales
- Protect water
 - Water quality remains important, availability and flood control are rising concerns
 - Protect headwaters and floodplains
 - Conserve salmon, with emphasis on Sandy and Clackamas populations
 - Native Americans care about lamprey as much as salmon
- Conserve rare habitats and species, especially oak and prairie
- Projects with multiple benefits (habitat, storm-water, access) are important, especially in areas developed pre-Title 13
- Continue capital grant program and other approaches to leverage community capacity
- Develop new approaches to partnership with the rural/farm community
- Empower partners

Key concerns identified about potential bond measure:

- The agricultural community remains concerned about the loss of farmland
- Long-term operations and maintenance

Key themes on racial equity:

- All organizations support the idea of diversity, equity and inclusion being a component of a new bond and are considering how to best address it within their organizations. Some are further along evolving their thinking and programs than others
- The diversity, equity and inclusion lens should not become a filter
- Investment in today's underserved geographies may not address tomorrow's population distribution
- Programmatic investment may be more effective than capital investment for addressing some equity issues, and is necessary regardless

Areas of disagreement within this audience:

- There is no fundamental disagreement among the overwhelming majority of organizations in this group
- Two of 30 organizations voiced concerns with investment far outside the urban growth boundary

Suggestions for future engagement with this audience:

The conservation community enthusiastically embraces additional capital investment in nature, and all of the organizations expressed interest in continuing to participate in the conversation of shaping a bond measure. Nearly all expressed excitement to participate in a group meeting in

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autumn to look for synergy and consensus. Two organizations asked for more interaction between their board of directors and Metro and specifically the Parks and Nature Department, to build better understanding and trust (Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District, Tualatin Watershed Council).

Additional information:

Appendix 1 – Community meeting notes 1

Appendix 2 – Community meeting notes 2

Appendix 3 – Community meeting notes 3

Appendix 1

Organizations included in this effort

Organization Name	Type	Who
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife	Agency	Present Todd Alsbury (fish biologist) and Susan Barnes (regional habitat biologist).
United State Fish and Wildlife Service Refuges	Agency	Larry Klimek (refuge manager), Curt Mykut (refuge scientist)
United States Fish and Wildlife Service Regional	Agency	Kevin Foerster (Regional Chief, Pacific Region) Craig Rowland (Partnerships Director),
Audubon Society of Portland	Cons Org	Bob Sallinger (Conservation Director), Micah Meskel
Columbia Land Trust	Cons Org	Dan Roix (Conservation Program Director), Ian Sinks (Stewardship Director)
Forest Park Conservancy	Cons Org	Renee Meyers (ED) and others incl. board member
Pacific Birds	Cons Org	Brad Bales, Bruce Taylor
The Nature Conservancy	Cons Org	Kathleen Brennan-Hunter (Conservation Program Director)
Thousand Friends of Oregon	Cons Org	Russ Hoeflich (ED)
Tualatin Riverkeepers	Cons Org	Kris Balliet (ED)
Urban Greenspaces Institute	Cons Org	Mike Houck (ED), Ted Labbe (Co-ED)
Wetlands Conservancy	Cons Org	Esther Lev (ED)
Willamette Partnership	Cons Org	Sara O'Brien (ED)
Clackamas SWCD	SWCD	Tom Salzar (District Manager)
East Multnomah SWCD	SWCD	Jay Udelhoven (ED), Andrew Browne, Matt Shipkey
Tualatin SWCD	SWCD	Lacey Townsend (District Manager)
West Multnomah SWCD	SWCD	Jim Cathcart (District Manager) and two board members
Clackamas WES	Water Treatment	Ron Wierenga (Environmental Services Manager), Gail Shaloum,
Clean Water Services	Water Treatment	Rich Hunter (Watershed Program Manager), Carol Murdock (Water Resources Program Manager)
Portland BES	Water Treatment	Jane Bacchieri (Watershed Services Director), Shannah Anderson several others
WC Clackamas	WC	Cheryl McGinnis (ED), Zachary Bergen (Restoration Coord.)

Appendix 1

Organizations included in this effort

Organization Name	Type	Who
WC Columbia Slough	WC	Jeannie Stamberger (acting ED), Matthew Lee (Stewardship)
WC Greater Oregon City	WC	Rita Baker (Council Coordinator)
WC Johnson Ck	WC	Daniel Newberry (ED), Chuck Lobdell (Restoration)
WC North Clackamas Urban	WC	Neil Schulman (ED) and board chair;
WC Oswego Lake	WC	Stephanie Wagner (Chair) and board member
WC Sandy	WC	Steve Wise (ED), Kara Caselas (restoration)
WC Tryon Ck	WC	Terri Preeg Rigsby (acting ED); Torrey Lindbo (Pres.)
WC Tualatin	WC	April Olbrich (Council Coordinator), Rich Van Buskirk (Board Chair)

Appendix 2

Ideas for future capital investment in nature in our region

Conversations between Metro and with Conservation Partners Summer 2018

Questions / General Agenda

- Metro is exploring a third bond measure, likely for the November, 2019 ballot.
- What does “Bond Measure” mean?
 - Bond 1 and 2 overview, history, rules of capital investment
- Metro is emphasizing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and a racial equity lens as part of moving ahead for the benefit of our entire community
 - What this means to Metro and how it might affect this effort.
- Questions for our partners
 - What are your organizations conservation priorities in the Metro Region for the next 1-2 decades?
 - Given that, how do you think Metro should invest future capital funding (if at all)?
 - Thematically, including land kept in agricultural/forestry production vs. taken out of production.
 - Geographically specifically
 - Even specific projects you hope can be accomplished
 - What are the types of activities or restrictions that are most/least desirable on properties that are preserved or purchased with Metro bond funds?
 - How do you see conservation efforts best aligning with other regional challenges such as growth, housing and transportation?
 - What priorities for a potential new bond would lead to the best outcomes for conservation? Agriculture? Rural communities? Other interests of concern to you?
 - If bond funds could be used by governmental entities (including SWCDs) to acquire/hold easements or fee title, how would this affect your work? Specifically, under what scenarios could you incorporate Metro funding into existing or potential funding sources for similar projects?
 - How is your organization addressing DEI, specifically racial equity?
- We will have many opportunities for input and community conversation about this issue, but the form and timing are still evolving.
 - How would you like to be involved in these or otherwise helping to shape or promote a potential Bond Measure moving forward?
 - What additional information would you like from us?
- Who else we are talking to and next steps in the process

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Completed by: Robert Spurlock, Mary Rose Navarro, Brian Moore

Audience overview: Local park agencies are an important audience because they receive local share funding, build and maintain regional trails, and partner with Metro in natural area land management. Metro engaged with staff at local park provider agencies, including the cities within the Metro boundary, Clackamas and Washington county parks departments (Multnomah County does not have one) and two park districts: Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District and North Clackamas Parks and Recreation District. Depending on the size and organizational structure of the agency, staff representatives may have been city managers, parks directors, community development directors, public works directors, city planners or parks planners.

Engagement format: We held one-hour meetings, in person at the local agency's offices. In a few cases we conducted phone interviews instead of face-to-face meetings. We reviewed current parks system plans and capital improvement project lists, and paid particular attention to the results of any recent community engagement that identified investment priorities.

Engagement point people: Robert Spurlock, Mary Rose Navarro and Brian Moore represented Metro at the meetings.

Key priorities identified for potential bond measure: The following themes emerged from the conversations and are listed here in order of how frequently they were mentioned:

- *Local share.* Every agency (with the exception of one or two) emphatically stated the importance of local share dollars to their budgets. The relative importance of local share to a given city's overall parks budget spans a wide range. For example, Gresham described local share as critical while Portland and Wilsonville characterized it as a welcome supplement to project budgets. Some cities have waived parks system development charges in an effort to incentivize more housing development at a lower cost. Without SDC funding, these cities are all the more reliant on local share funding. Many cities requested that Metro consider increasing the local share portion of the overall funding allocation, relative to the past bonds.
- *Local share flexibility.* Ten agencies expressed a desire for fewer restrictions in how local share funds can be spent. Most of these 10 agencies pointed to the need for more active recreation improvements – including sports fields – within their systems.
- *Trails.* Every local park provider with the exception of Johnson City named trails as a priority for their community and as an area where bond measure funding could make an important contribution. Within the theme of trails several needs emerged, including (in order of frequency):
 - completing gaps in the regional trails network
 - land/easement acquisition
 - bridges (several cities are seeking funding for new bike/ped bridges, which tend to be expensive)
 - trails needed as part of transportation system improvements
 - trails needed for economic development
 - new trailheads
 - existing trails that are now substandard or deteriorating and in need of upgrades

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- *Neighborhood park improvements.* Twenty of the local park providers named new capital improvements for neighborhood parks as a priority within their community. Specific needs within this theme included (in order of frequency):
 - New neighborhood parks (either on land they already own or on new land to be acquired)
 - New nature play areas
 - New traditional play structures
 - New restrooms
 - Picnic shelters
 - Habitat restoration in local parks
 - Community gardens
- *Land acquisition.* Nineteen of the local park providers named land acquisition as an important area where they would like to spend future bond dollars. Specific priorities for land acquisition, listed in order of frequency, include:
 - Trail easement/land acquisition
 - Local/neighborhood park land acquisition
 - Creek/river corridor, floodplain or headwaters acquisition
 - Natural area or “open space” acquisition – some considered this a need while others cited it as a concern. See the “concerns” section, below.
- *Renewal and replacement and/or deferred maintenance.* Half the local park providers brought up the issue of aging infrastructure in existing parks. Of these 13 agencies, most emphasized that this issue has become so serious that it is affecting their capacity to open and maintain new parks. The following types of facilities, listed in order of frequency, were cited as needing replacement.
 - Irrigation systems
 - Play structures
 - Trails
 - Parking lots
 - Restrooms
 - Picnic shelters
 - Furnishings, such as benches and picnic tables
- *Water access.* Ten agencies, particularly those along the Tualatin and Willamette rivers, raised the issue of providing new riverfront access areas, or making improvements to existing areas. Non-motorized boat launches were the most common need discussed, followed by motorized boat ramps and beach/swimming access.
- *ADA upgrades.* Seven agencies specifically discussed the urgency of making park facilities welcoming for people of all abilities. Specific types of facilities that were mentioned include:
 - Trails
 - Play areas
 - Restrooms
 - Park furnishings
- Other themes that emerged included:

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- Tualatin made a strong case for a new regional nature park at Metro’s Heritage Pine Natural Area
- The ability to use bond dollars to fund master planning efforts
- Green infrastructure needs, such as bioswales, fish passage-deficient culvert replacements and street trees
- Improvements to camping facilities in Clackamas County parks

Key concerns identified about potential bond measure:

- Nearly every agency expressed concerns about the voters’ willingness to pass three Metro funding measures in the next three years in addition to local funding measures that were either recently passed or are planned to appear on local ballots in the near future. Local staff used terms like “tax fatigue” and “bond burnout.” The bigger concern was not that a Metro parks bond would fail, but that voters would not support local funding measures.
 - Local staff mentioned a number of recent funding measures that passed:
 - Forest Grove passed local operating levy
 - West Linn passed bond measure in May 2018.
 - Tualatin passed transportation bond in May 2018.
 - Gresham Barlow School District just passed a bond.
 - Sherwood School District bond passed a couple years ago.
 - Staff mentioned several more measures that may appear in the future:
 - Oregon City School District going to ballot in November 2018.
 - North Clackamas School District on ballot November 2018.
 - Clackamas County going to ballot in May 2019 for new courthouse.
 - Lake Oswego is considering a parks bond in May 2019.
 - Possible that Tualatin would go for local parks bond in November 2019.
 - THPRD may be going for another bond in 3 to 7 years.
 - Sherwood is considering a public safety levy.
- Parks are just one of many infrastructure needs. There is a possible perception within smaller cities that this money could be better spent on other infrastructure needs like sewer, water and streets.
- Metro should do a better job of marketing the three funding measures as a coordinated strategy, rather than piecemeal.
- Many local providers expressed a concern that if we buy more land and build more parks, we will put pressure on our already stressed maintenance resources. In several jurisdictions, renewal and replacement is the bigger need.
- The growing presence of people experiencing houselessness in our parks and natural areas creates a need for more enforcement. Adding more natural area land will increase the need for enforcement.
- Most cities expressed a strong desire to have a local share component. This desire was sometimes expressed as a concern that Metro may decide to make local investments through grant awards rather than through direct allocations. Direct allocations are preferred over grants

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because they are more predictable. Local share's predictability has made it an important tool for local agencies in the past.

- If there is a grant component to the next bond, continuing the 2:1 local match requirement would be a concern to many.
- When community organizations apply for and receive grants, the local agency then has to devote a lot of time and staff resources to the project, even if it isn't the local agency's priority. These projects build capacity for community organizations but require agencies to invest a lot of expertise and time.
- Some local partners shared that their cities don't have many natural area and restoration opportunities within their boundaries, while others expressed a concern that the Metro bond isn't geared toward their communities' more pressing parks-related needs, such as developed parks and active recreation.
- One city expressed a big need for removing invasive plants from local natural areas, but was concerned that this type of work isn't capital and would therefore not be eligible for bond funding.

Key themes on racial equity:

Several cities (though by no means all) exhibited a strong focus on advancing racial equity through their parks work. Key themes that emerged included:

- While a particular city by itself may not be racially diverse, there is a recognition that particular parks within that city can be regional draws that serve diverse populations. Examples include Milwaukie Bay Park and Gladstone's Meldrum Bar Park.
- Several local agencies mentioned that regional guidance from Metro on diversity, equity and inclusion would be appreciated, and one city suggested that bond funding could be used to develop local racial equity plans.
- Making parks responsive to and reflective of the populations they serve. Many cities have directly engaged communities of color for direction in how to achieve this goal. In response to this input, local parks agencies are working to provide the following:
 - New parks in park-deficient areas that also have historically marginalized population
 - Family gathering places
 - Culturally specific sports such as futsal courts, soccer fields and cricket pitches
 - Restrooms. There is a growing recognition that for many – and especially people of color – clean restrooms are an integral part of access to nature.
 - New trails as a way to connect park-deficient, historically marginalized populations to existing community parks in neighboring, well-served communities.
 - Community gardens
 - Places to hang piñatas in picnic shelters
 - Installing public art that is reflective of the community
- Many cities are incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion into how they do business. For example:
 - Staff trainings that are of a deep and meaningful nature
 - Hiring MWESB contractors
 - Eliminating barriers to hiring in maintenance departments

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- Building community partnerships with community based organizations, schools and tribes
- Conducting multilingual outreach
- Engaging historically marginalized communities in planning and design
- Providing language interpretation at events
- Developing tribal cultural exchange programs
- Utilizing youth work corps programs

Areas of disagreement within this audience:

Some cities expressed a fear that by focusing solely on racial equity, their residents will perceive this as an inherently inequitable distribution of resources. In other words, white taxpayers may feel that they are paying in more than they are receiving. The refrain, “we try to serve everyone equally” was sometimes heard.

By contrast, other cities suggested that in order to truly prioritize racial equity, bond funds should be allocated based on the percent of a given city’s population that is non-white. In other words, more racially diverse cities would receive a larger share.

Suggestions for future engagement with this audience:

Most cities suggested that Metro representatives (councilors, executive leadership or project staff) present to local elected officials, beginning after January 2019 so that those who are newly elected this November will be seated. If and when these presentations happen, local staff suggested that Metro bring up-to-date versions of maps and lists showing past projects and investments in local jurisdictions.

Questions from this audience:

1. Can local share be used outside UGB? (Clackamas County and Washington counties both asked)
2. When we get our tax bill, will we see two simultaneous Metro Natural Area bonds that expire at different times, or just a single bond that’s extended?
3. Is there a way to use Metro bond funds to offset SDCs?
4. What can the bond do to help local jurisdictions with their wetland mitigation needs? Mitigation for parks and trails projects can sometimes cost as much as the projects themselves.
5. What will the formula be for allocating local share?
6. Would Metro be willing/able to use regional share to acquire local-scale properties?
7. What happens if Metro’s housing bond doesn’t pass?
8. Would this bond be eligible to completely rebuild some existing trails that are now failing?
9. Are there ways to leverage emergency preparedness dollars for flooding with these bond dollars? Could this be criteria for grants?

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Community forum engagement | Fall 2018



Completed by: Mary Rose Navarro

Audience overview:

Metro staff partnered with 10 community organizations to engage people of color and people from other historically marginalized communities. It is important to engage with this community to determine their priorities for protecting water quality, restoring habitat and connecting people to nature — and how racial equity can be advanced through bond investment.

Approximately 90 people participated. The focus of the outreach was everyday people who might have a wide variety of interest and experiences with parks, nature or the outdoors. Besides the cohort of community members discussed below, only a few of the participants were staff of community organizations.

Engagement format:

Two community forums were hosted on Saturday, Sept. 22 in Hillsboro and on Wednesday, Sept. 26 in Milwaukie. The forums were 3 ½ hours long and included meals, stipends and child care. There was a Spanish-speaking table at each forum where presentations were interpreted simultaneously and discussions happened in Spanish.

The forums introduced participants to the potential ways that bond funding could be invested through 10 stations that included general descriptions of the work, examples and images. Each station was staffed, and participants had 45 minutes to visit the stations and learn about the work. They were then given an opportunity to answer three questions in facilitated table discussions. The questions were:

- What stations jump out as having the greatest benefits to you, your family and your community?
- How can we bring more benefits to communities of color and other historically marginalized communities?
- Which stations should we do less of in order to achieve greater outcomes in others? Why?

After a break the participants learned about the local share and capital grant portions of the previous bond measures and discussed a fourth question at their tables:

- How can local share and capital grant criteria be improved to assure the funding supports communities of color and other historically marginalized communities?

Engagement point people:

Metro staff leading this effort included Mary Rose Navarro and Laura Oppenheimer.

A cohort of community people helped shape the forum agenda and materials. They also were responsible for outreach and paying the stipends to participants. The cohort included:

- Todd Struble/Brandon Cruz from APANO
- Alejandra Ruiz from the Portland Harbor Community Coalition

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- Danielle Jones from Kairos PDX
- Malin Jimenez from Verde
- Mariana Valenzuela from Centro Cultural
- Sadie Atwell from the Coalition of Communities of Color
- Surabhi Mahajan from Friends of Trees
- Micah Meskel from Portland Audubon
- James Holt from Confluence Environmental Center
- Neil Schulman from North Clackamas Urban Watershed Council

Key priorities identified for potential bond measure:

Many forum participants observed how interconnected the work is. Therefore, while this report does indicate priorities, it's important to note that participants particularly valued the opportunity to invest bond funds in a way that can achieve the most outcomes.

Due to the interconnected nature of this work, participants had many questions and concerns even within the priorities that emerged. Their comments shed light on the complexity of achieving racial equity through bond investments.

Three priorities emerged due to the personal benefits to communities of color and other historically marginalized communities.

Provide access to nature in underserved communities

"What should we do to better know nature? Having parks closer is better to get knowledge first and connections. This can lead to later going further out."

- Existing parks need to be improved with a variety of park amenities.
- Purchasing additional land, including small parcels, that are closer to where people live.
- Research where park deficiencies exist and how bond money can be directed there.
- Recognize the need to find balance between access and preservation of nature.
- Consider the potential of displacement, the need for transportation.
- Community engagement will make sure projects will actually strengthen communities.

Protect culturally significant lands

"This section is very important because if it is a huge focus, then it will cover other areas such as, protects streams and riverbanks"

- Support for this station depends on who decides what culturally significant lands are, where they are located and who will have access to the lands. An important reflection in this approach is to ask how Metro ownership of culturally significant lands will differ from government ownership of land during colonization.

Improving existing parks

"Before we go to new areas, let's improve what we have. This work allows us to build the good will to then go on doing new projects."

- Take care of existing parks before investing in new parks
- Improve existing parks to make them welcoming and provide access to all communities of color
- Emphasis on improving ADA accessibility

Potential parks and nature bond measure

Community forum engagement | Fall 2018

- Provide enough parking spaces
- Blue Lake Park needs many improvements
- Improvements that can extend use into the winter, such as year-round structures with heaters
- Do major restoration projects in our existing parks
- Concerns were expressed about transit access and park fees

Communities of color and other historically marginalized communities identified another top priority due to its importance for overall community and ecosystem health, although they did not see the same immediate, direct personal benefits.

Protecting stream and river banks

“Water is life. Benefits of clean, healthy water and rivers benefits everyone — flora, fauna and humans.”

“Make sure no one hurts nature.” Spanish-speaking participant

- The importance of clean water was widely expressed. There was recognition that stream restoration affected fish, animals and humans; that erosion could impact this food chain; that restoration can reduce flooding.
- Restoration goes hand-in-hand with protection. Restoration of streams and river banks is a bigger issue than Metro. Work should be done in partnership with other agencies.
- Restoration work can be linked to the preservation of culturally significant land and Indigenous communities should be closely tied to this work

Local share and capital grants

- Conduct impact assessments for projects that include housing, transportation and access.
- Providing access to nature in communities of color should be a local share criterion.
- Prioritize projects that engage and partner with culturally-specific and other historically marginalized communities
- Develop metrics to assess the ability of the local share program to advance racial equity
- Require local share and grant-funded projects to be open to the public without a fee
- Ensure that parks are kept clean and maintained

Key concerns identified about potential bond measure:

Gentrification

“Yes I want everyone to have access, but do local parks lead to gentrification and pricing people out? Add programs that help keep people in place.”

- Concern about displacement was discussed. While communities of color and other historically marginalized communities need access to nature due to the stress of their everyday lives, they are worried about increasing property values and rents.
- Parks and nature bond investments need to coincide with other anti-displacement measures.

Regional investments

- There was strong feedback that nature-based recreation only benefitted specific groups of people and did nothing to advance equity

Local share and capital grants

Potential parks and nature bond measure

Community forum engagement | Fall 2018

- Local share agencies don't consistently demonstrate a commitment to racial equity
- There's a lack of follow up and accountability

Key themes on racial equity:

"I think a big one is access. From physically getting to a place, to knowing it is there, to having amenities. Community engagement will drive success."

- Identify where historically marginalized communities need nature parks and work with members of diverse communities to address the need.
- Evaluate risks of fire, landslide, floods and other such events that could impact historically marginalized communities. Use this to inform bond investments.
- Community members need to be involved in the decision-making through design, construction and maintenance of the park.
- Conduct an impact analysis before moving forward on any new park development to consider social and economic opportunities as well as environmental impacts.
- New park improvements need to build the community's capacity to participate in decisions regarding their neighborhoods.
- Construction of park and natural area improvements need to contribute to the economic vitality of culturally specific and other historically marginalized communities including working with COBID firms, and hiring and training a local workforce.
- Work closely with transportation agencies to make sure parks are accessibility by transit.
- Do not increase park fees.
- Providing resources for houseless communities to be in nature in a more habitable way, affordable camping, access to restrooms

Areas of disagreement within this audience:

- While there was support for filling in trail gaps along Marine Drive and completing the Columbia Slough trail, many other people questioned whether trails should be a priority. Supporters were looking for hiking opportunities and places to ride with family. Many supported trails that connected people to natural areas and parks. However, there was less support for providing biking opportunities for fast cyclists with spandex.
- While many participants wanted to focus on taking care of existing parks and making them more accessible, there were also participants who felt that creating a vision for new parks (like at Chehalem Ridge) was a great model and would serve the community for generations.
- Major restoration, particularly projects tied to rivers and streams, was widely supported. People questioned whether bond investments should focus on completing restoration projects on land we already owned before acquiring new land for these major project.

Suggestions for future engagement with this audience:

There were many comments about providing information about the places where people can camp, hike and be in nature. There were suggestions for free tours and excursions, programming in different languages and providing transportation.

Questions

- How set is local share? What if we take local share out of the bond?
- Why do the criteria differ between local share and capital grants? Why can't they be the same?

Potential parks and nature bond measure

Community forum engagement | Fall 2018



- Can the newly forming Parks and Nature Equity Advisory Committee play a role to apply equity analysis to local share projects?
- Do we believe local share supported equity, or did it create displacement? Can an equity analysis of local share projects be done?
- Can you buy options contracts with land owners that aren't ready to sell but may soon?
- Could there be mandates about a community-informed process?

Potential parks and nature bond measure

Indigenous community engagement | Fall 2018



Completed by: Alice Froehlich

Audience overview:

Metro staff engaged with members of Portland Parks Native American Community Advisory Council (NACAC). NACAC members are Indigenous community members and represent numerous organizations and tribes. It is important to engage with Indigenous community members because they have a close relationship to some of the ancestral and ceded homelands that Metro stewards. Portland has the ninth largest urban Indigenous population in the United States. The Indigenous community in Portland is very diverse, with over 390 tribes and bands represented, and Oregon is home to nine federally recognized tribes. Although the community is diverse, there are some shared values about the importance of clean water, healthy land, safe harvest, ceremony spaces and land management practices.

Engagement format:

Metro staff held three small group meetings; each meeting was four hours long. Initially there was one small group meeting planned, but the community requested the two additional meetings. In addition to the small group meetings there was one one-on-one meeting.

Engagement point people:

- Alice Froehlich, lead
- Rosie McGown, administrative support

Key priorities identified for potential bond measure:

The key priority for this community is changing systems of who is in power and who has access, in order to be more inclusive of people of color and other historically marginalized groups.

- Land acquisition criteria priorities:
 - Protect Indigenous culturally significant land (request for cultural resource assessment conducted with Indigenous persons)
 - Protect salmon, steelhead and lamprey
 - Protect culturally significant native plants
 - Protect groundwater, stream and riverbanks to support healthy water quality and resilient communities and drinkable water
 - Protect spaces that show rarity, that reflect the relative diversity of an ecosystem or possesses unique natural features
- Capital project criteria priorities:
 - Infrastructure for the rejuvenation of cultural practices
 - Projects that will benefit the indigenous community, such as gathering spaces or access to water, safe access for elders and children
 - Projects that prioritize underserved communities
 - Low impact access improvements
- Local share and grant program priorities:
 - Priority given to projects initiated and led by culturally specific organizations to ensure meaningful relationship between the grantee and the community the grant intends to serve

Potential parks and nature bond measure

Indigenous community engagement | Fall 2018

- Support community-based projects that develop a relationship with the land and being able to harvest and eat from the landscape
- Education opportunities to access science in a way that is culturally relevant and significant
- Focus on providing access to STEM for at-risk or historically marginalized youth and that promote environmental career pathways by engaging older youth and teens
- For the culturally significant sites that fall within the jurisdiction of local share, Metro should require cultural competency or cultural responsibility among local share recipients, working with the Indigenous community to define competencies and practices.
- Projects that improve soil quality, reduce and eliminate toxins in our landscape

Key concerns identified about potential bond measure:

Support the leadership and work of historically marginalized communities; don't have white dominant culture lead for them.

- Concerns around who is involved in the engagement for the potential bond, as well as who is involved in the future implementation of the bond. Money needs to be set aside to engage communities of color; people of color often can't engage because of a lack of resources. Engagement is expensive but it is a wise, long-term investment. There also needs to be a class-informed lens: engage vulnerable communities throughout every stage of planning and implementation.
- Gentrification
 - How to make it easier for low-income community members to access nature close to home without creating another avenue for gentrification
 - Looking at gentrification intergenerationally, considering both where communities are now and where communities are being pushed out to
 - Intersection with the housing bond, inclusion of natural areas zoned to allow for affordable housing on site or prioritizing close proximity of affordable housing to access to nature
- How will this bond address honoring the Indigenous sense of time and space, ensuring a longevity point of view rather than prioritizing short-term success
- Concerns about purchasing land and building project with the goal of "recreation." Any new recreation should be low-impact and culturally significant, prioritize underserved communities, and not conflict with indigenous cultural values
- Concern about who does the work that bond dollars are spent on: engaging COBID companies and helping those companies build capacity to take on an increased workload.
- Providing resources for houseless communities to be in nature in a more habitable way, affordable camping, access to restrooms
- Climate change

Key themes on racial equity:

Separating out racial equity as a distinct bullet point demonstrates the issue; this should be imbedded in all aspects of the bond development and work at Metro, not just viewed as a box to be checked. Equity needs to be included throughout the whole system, and reflected in who is making decisions and who is benefiting from the bond and the dollars it generates.

Potential parks and nature bond measure

Indigenous community engagement | Fall 2018



Who is leading the racial equity work at Metro and how it is being led is important. Predominantly white organizations have been providing racial equity education and this is an issue. Addressing white fragility is important; racial equity work is uncomfortable and cannot be done through white comfort filters.

Areas of disagreement within this audience:

There was not clear disagreement within this audience, there was lots of conversation about trails and prioritizing trails over other types of investments. The group ultimately decided that other priorities were more important than trails.

Suggestions for future engagement with this audience:

Meeting attendees requested more engagements that would build knowledge of bond issues within the Indigenous community. There is desire for opportunities for larger groups to be included, especially at organizations and locations where Indigenous community members gather. They would like to have tours of Metro sites and learn more about target areas and land acquisition. This group wants to learn as well as help inform and influence the details of how the bond priorities can be met. They want to be consulted and included at every step of the process possible, now through the election and beyond.

Additional information:

Appendix 1 – Community meeting notes 1

Appendix 2 – Community meeting notes 2

Appendix 3 – Community meeting notes 3

Appendix 1

Community meeting notes 1

Meeting: Indigenous community bond engagement
Date/time: August 27, 2018
Place: Metro Regional Center: Council Chambers

Attendees

Savahna Jackson, James Holt, Karen Kitchen, Alice Froehlich

Topics

Welcome

Metro parks and nature is beginning stakeholder engagement to help shape a 2019 bond renewal. In addition to this group there is a stakeholder table and a community cohort engagement group focusing on racial equity. The cohort consist of ten community leaders assisting with getting feedback from their larger communities. There is also engagement with the agricultural community and conservation groups who have traditionally been involved in bond creation in the past. Parks and nature director Jon Blasher requested a specific engagement strategy with the indigenous community.

Metro Council will hold a retreat on October 4 where recommendations from all of these groups will be presented.

Bond 101

What is a bond?

The bond will be around \$200 million dollars and can only be spent on buying public land and funding public capital projects. Capital projects are new construction or major improvements and does not include maintenance. Examples are: roads, culverts, large scale restoration projects, generally projects that cost at least \$50,000. No more than 10% of bond money can be spent on administrative costs.

Who can spend it?

Metro and other local governments have direct access to funds to buy land and complete capital projects. Local governments that receive direct funds are limited to park providers including cities and counties. Metro also provides grants for capital projects to nonprofits and other local governments including schools, utility providers and other special districts. This is the level where tribal governments can receive funding. The Nature in Neighborhoods grant program is an example of this type of funding.

Bond focus areas discussion

Bond renewal current focus

Protecting land, improving park and natural areas and supporting community projects.

Acquisitions

When purchasing land with bond funds, the land must fit within certain criteria and be maintained, with non-bond funds, for these criteria. Long term purchasing plans were developed in the 1980s and 1990s with the past bond measures focusing on these target areas. Metro is currently looking at where land has been purchased and where there are current barriers to access. There are examples

Appendix 1

Community meeting notes 1

of Metro purchased land managed through Intergovernmental Agreements, such as the agreement with Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District to manage Cooper Mountain Nature Park. Often nonprofits and smaller local governments often do not have the capacity to do this. Do tribes have the capacity to maintain land while trying to bring it back to its historical uses? Currently Metro is not aware of the criteria used by tribal governments for purchasing land.

Review of proposed criteria

Protecting land

- Trails
 - Recognition they are a regional priority but are also extremely expensive to build
 - The criteria specifically calls out walking and biking, does this include wildlife corridors?
 - Focus on providing access to and connections between natural areas
- Clarification needed of the term “culturally significant land”
 - Proposed change: Protect indigenous culturally significant land
 - To determine what is culturally significant engagement is needed with all tribal groups in the region, not just urban tribes.
 - Resources for what is culturally significant: Virginia Butler at PSU, Eirik Thorsgard’s work with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
 - Some may not want indigenous culturally significant land identified, clarification would need to be made between protecting this land and providing access
 - Provide a cultural resources assessment of all purchased land done either by or with partnership with indigenous community
- Proposed addition: Protect culturally significant native plants
 - Call out specific plants
 - Provide opportunity for ongoing engagement with plants
 - Include a list of preferred plants for Metro and partners to focus on for acquisitions, stabilizations and other capital projects.
- Language from 2006 bon regarding rarity should be included – “Rarity, reflects the relative diversity of an ecosystem or possesses unique natural features”
- Proposed clarification: Protect salmon, trout, steelhead and lamprey
 - This may be implied in “protect stream and river banks” but preferences is to call out species
- New recreation
 - Proposed change: Provide new types of access and engagement with natural spaces (or the natural landscape)
 - Clarification on types of recreation, limit to no or low impact access
 - Will this be used to purchase new land with specific recreation activities in mind?

Creating welcoming nature parks

- Identify locations for big projects that will benefit the indigenous community, such as gathering spaces or access to water
 - Killin Wetlands: Wocus in water but no current access point to water
 - Low impact access improvements
 - Stream area that could be purchased of a sweat lodge with wood burning permits

Appendix 1

Community meeting notes 1

- Proposed language: infrastructure for the rejuvenation of cultural practices
 - Infrastructure in existing and new places
 - This could fit under all three criteria: protecting land, creating welcoming nature parks and supporting community projects
- Existing park improvements: restrooms, additional parking
- Clarification needed on the vision
 - Provided by Jon: fulfilling the vision of the master plans of existing parks, question between beginning phase one for new parks or working on phase two at existing parks.
- Clarification on new parks
- Stipulations on who is doing the work, recommendations to hire M/WBE companies

Supporting community projects

- Increase portion spent on grants, reducing acquisitions

Next steps:

Questions to answer

Can another agency hold a grant program to distribute bond funds?

Is there interest from other agencies in holding this type of program?

Is Metro the best to make the decisions about where grant funding goes?

Where does Metro want to buy land?

What do IGAs look like?

Documents to provide

Copy of past bond resolutions

Draft list of capital projects

Map of priority purchase areas

Example of IGA maintenance agreement

Next meeting

Monday, September 10: 12:30 – 4 p.m.

Metro Regional Center: Council Chambers

Appendix 2

Community meeting notes 2

Meeting: Indigenous community bond engagement meeting 2
Date/time: September 10, 2018
Place: Metro Regional Center: Council Chambers

Attendees

Angela Morrill, Clifton Bruno, Christine Bruno, James Holt, Gerard Rodriguez, Karen Kitchen, Judy Bluehorse Skelton, Jessica Rojas

Topics

Welcome

Discussed the representation of the native community in the bond engagement process, Judy Bluehorse Skelton is a member of the stakeholder committee and James Holt is a member of the community forum cohort. Judy offered to meet with anyone individually to get as much input from the community as possible leading up to the Council presentation in October. The development of the two previous parks and nature bonds (1995 and 2006) did not include any engagement with the indigenous community.

This initial round of bond engagement is a higher level review of the bond funding criteria, a second phase of engagement will refine the criteria and identify specific projects. The criteria to be reviewed will be applied to land acquisition, capital projects and community grant programs. A parks and nature tour was requested specifically for this group, with the possibility of a spring tour to focus on specific projects relevant to the refinement process.

Bond engagement

Metro is currently in phase one of engagement and is getting input from the agricultural community, conservation community, indigenous community, local governments, metro staff and community members with the assistance of culturally specific organizations. Metro is committed to addressing equity in the process and outcomes of the bond engagement and development. A feedback loop confirming accurate and respectful representation of the information being gathered is required to ensure accountability in this process. Ultimately Metro Council will make the decision on what the bond will look like in December.

Engagement timeline:

- Sept 14: stakeholder table meeting #1
- Sept 22: community forum #1
- Sept 26: community forum #2
- Sept 27: stakeholder table meeting #2 (focusing on commitment to racial equity)
- Oct 11: Council retreat (cohort and indigenous community member to present)
- Oct 22: stakeholder table meeting #3

Background information

What is a bond?

The bond is for 8-10 years and will be around \$200 million dollars. Bond funds can only use for public land acquisition and public capital projects. Capital projects are new construction or major improvements. Examples are: roads, culverts, large scale restoration projects, generally projects

Appendix 2

Community meeting notes 2

that cost at least \$50,000. No more than 10% of bond money can be spent on administrative costs and bond funds do not cover maintenance costs.

Who can spend it?

Metro and other local governments have direct access to funds to buy land and complete capital projects. Local governments that receive direct funds (local share) are limited to park providers including cities and counties. Metro also provides grants for capital projects to nonprofits and other local governments including schools, utility providers and other special districts. Metro's legal team is clarifying if tribal governments would be eligible for local share, direct award or only receiving grants. Funds can only be spent on projects that fit within the criteria set by Metro, this is an opportunity to advance Metro's racial equity work.

Bond focus areas discussion

Acquisition criteria (protecting land)

Rising land costs increases the importance of purchasing land now with the expectation that restoration and access projects can come later. Discussion around where land should be purchased led to the importance of understanding how Metro's proposed funding measures work together (housing, parks and nature, transportation) and the impact they will have on the lowest income levels of our communities. The group requested information on the 2040 growth plan in order to look at projections of demographic shifts, where low income and communities of color will be moving to, and recommend focusing on acquisition and access in those areas. The discussion on long term planning also stressed the importance of factoring in climate change into the bond decision making process.

Grants criteria (supporting community projects)

- Would like to continue a grant program as part of this bond
- Grant program to be balanced with groups recommended focus on land acquisition
- Focus on developing relationships with grantees
- Focus on communities and organizations in cities with less local park funding
- Develop accountability measures for ensuring grantees incorporate racial equity into their projects
- Continue supporting educational programs

Review of proposed criteria

Protecting land

- Proposed addition: protect groundwater, stream and riverbanks to support healthy water quality
 - Stresses water quality as a quality of life issue
 - Do not use watershed jargon, keep public audience in mind
 - Protecting waterways for resilient communities (human and wildlife)
- Reiteration of concerns about "recreation"
 - Clarification requested about what this includes, making it clear to the public about what would and would not be allowed
 - Acknowledge that access will not be developed at all land being purchased

Appendix 2

Community meeting notes 2

- Low-impact, culturally significant, prioritizing underserved communities, doesn't conflict with indigenous cultural values
- Purchase of lands specifically for recreational use that may not have as much conservation value

Next steps:

Questions to answer

What was the acreage purchased with past bonds?

Information to provide

Details of UGB expansion recently recommended to Council

Next meeting

Tuesday, September 25: noon – 4 p.m.

Location: TBD

Topic: focus on capital projects, less time spent on bond overview and acquisitions.

Appendix 3

Community meeting notes 3

Meeting: Indigenous community bond engagement meeting 3
Date/time: September 25, 2018
Place: Metro Regional Center: Council Chambers

Attendees

Clifton Bruno, Gabe Sheoships, Gerard Rodriguez, Christine Bruno, James Holt, Judy Bluehorse Skelton, Karen Kitchen, Jessica Rojas, Savahna Jackson, Sequoia Breck

Topics

Follow up information from past meetings

Alice Froehlich brought the following documents to help answer previous questions:

- 2040 plan: version from early 2000s has a map projecting where people will move
- Oregon State Conservation strategy has a chapter on climate change, the conservation community looks to this document for guidance. Alice will send a link to the document.
- Intertwine Alliance's Regional Conservation Strategy Executive Summary
- Bio diversity guide and conservation strategy, borrowed from Metro science manager
- Metro parks and nature list of currently funded projects and priority projects for new funding
- Metro Bond Target Areas binder: target area refinement process occurred after the 2006 bond was approved by voters

Community forum recap

James Holt and Karen Kitchen participated in the Metro parks and nature bond community forum on September 22. The organizations Verde, Adelante Mujeres and Centro Cultural had the most turn out at the forum. Forum participants expressed the importance to engage underserved communities early and often during the decision making process, utilizing multiple languages in advertising and engagement materials. Key priorities reported from the forum included providing access to nature in underserved communities in terms of park location and proximity of nature to urban spaces as well as transportation and walkability options. Protecting culturally significant land, including sharing indigenous histories was also a priority. Participants also expressed the importance of using contractors from marginalized communities to perform the work of the bond.

Criteria discussion

Community projects: local share and grants

Grant funds need to be spent on public land, this typically includes a partnership between a nonprofit or special district government and park provider government agency. The group reviewed the community project criteria handout for what should be changed, added or removed. The following discussion emphasized bringing a human element to the grant program and focusing on projects that are led by the community, enhance soil quality for edibility, support cultural education and value livability and affordability.

- Priority given to projects initiated or led by culturally specific organizations to ensure meaningful relationship between grantee and the community the grant intends to serve
 - Prioritize culturally driven projects

Appendix 3

Community meeting notes 3

- For other organizations partnering with culturally specific organizations, place weight on demonstrated relationship building prior to application
- Soil quality for restoring edibility
 - Focus on the overall health of the soil to increase edibility
 - Support “projects that reduce and eliminate toxins in our landscape” as a more general way to address edibility
 - Support community-based projects that develop a relationship with the land around eating from the landscape
 - Include limitations on gathering, tending and foraging
- Education opportunities to access science in a way that is culturally relevant and significant
 - “Culturally relevant or significant” to be inclusive of more than just indigenous communities
 - Focus on providing access to STEM for at-risk or marginally affected youth
 - Promote environmental career pathways by engaging older youth and teens
 - Require capital projects to include an educational or interpretation piece
- Learning from past grant programs:
 - Provide bridge building opportunities between conservation and culturally specific organizations for meaningful engagement
 - Require outreach to underserved communities when developing projects
 - Involve all partners in all aspects of the grant process
 - Remove barriers to grant administration including providing funding for administration
 - Include culturally specific community members on grant application review committees and provide compensation for participation
 - Many culturally significant sites that fall within the jurisdiction of local share, Metro should require “cultural competency” or “cultural responsibility” among local share recipients
- Recognition of what to not provide funding for:
 - Nothing dominated by settler mythology
 - No funding for the end of the Oregon Trail
 - Nothing that doesn’t respect history prior to the 1830s and settlers

Report to Council

Key themes on racial equity:

Separating out racial equity as a distinct bullet point demonstrates the issue, this should be imbedded in all aspects of the bond development and work at Metro, not just viewed as a box to be checked.

Equity needs to be included throughout the whole system

- Who does the work: engaging COBID companies and help those companies build capacity to take on an increased workload
- Who is engaged: money needs to be set aside to engage communities of color, people of color often can’t engage because of a lack of resources. Engagement is expensive but it is a wise, long term investment.
- Class informed lens: engage vulnerable communities throughout every stage of planning
- Who accesses the sites: it takes time to have the capacity to access to mainstream western environmentalism and connections with nature, avoid conservation jargon and frame connection with nature as a basic human need

Appendix 3

Community meeting notes 3

- Who gets the grants: providing funds for long-term capacity building to help communities have a place at the decision making table. Support the work of the community, don't lead.

Who is leading the racial equity work at Metro and how, key criteria for hiring a consultant

- Predominantly white organizations have been providing racial equity education
- Who is doing the equity work matters. A white person, who doesn't have the lived experience, cannot be leading racial equity.
- Addressing white fragility is important, racial equity work is uncomfortable and cannot be done through white comfort filters
- Ensure that what is being said at engagement events and on the stakeholder table is being accurately captured

Key priorities:

- Where and how people interacting in the land
- Preserving nature and affordability at the same time
- General health of the land: protecting native plants, soil and waterways
- Purchasing land with lens of cultural significance
- Revitalization of cultural practices
- Changing systems of who is in power and who has access

Key concerns:

- Exclusion of people in the plan, need a clear understanding of how all of Metro's proposed funding measures work together to support the people of the region
- Gentrification
 - How to make it easier for low income community members to access nature close to home without creating another avenue for gentrification
 - Looking at gentrification intergenerationally, considering both where communities are now and where communities are being pushed out to
 - Intersection with the housing bond, inclusion of natural areas zoned to allow for affordable housing on site or prioritizing close proximity of affordable housing to access to nature
- Honoring the indigenous sense of time and space, ensuring a longevity point of view rather than prioritizing short term success
- If we are managing for edibility and long-term sustainability of landscape, include limits on harvesting
- Creating a safe space for children to access nature close to home to develop lifelong relationships with the land beyond school activities
- Addressing human needs in natural areas
 - Providing resources for houseless communities to be in nature in a more habitable way, affordable camping, access to restrooms
- Preparing for the unexpected

Engagement next steps

This phase of engagement is quickly wrapping up. Council will meet on October 11 for a retreat at Blue Lake Park. James Holt will present with the community cohort and offered to also represent

Appendix 3

Community meeting notes 3

this group. Many members of the group expressed interest in attending to also present or provide support. The group will meet for an hour prior to attending the retreat.

Council will make the decision to set the framework in December. The group would like transparency on how their feedback has been included in the recommendation. It is important to provide a feedback loop to allow the group to view and comment on the recommended framework before it is officially approved by Council.

The bond renewal engagement is part of larger long-term relationship building needed with the indigenous community. The group discussed engagement opportunities with the larger community leading to the next phase of engagement as an opportunity to help educate people about Metro and the department. Hiring a consultant from the community to lead the larger engagement effort was proposed. Alice requested the group send her any consultant recommendations. Engagement opportunities include providing information at upcoming events such as October 8 Indigenous Peoples Day events and events during November Native American Heritage Month. The group also requested tours this fall or winter focusing on Metro projects that are indigenous culturally specific. In the late spring/early winter, the second phase of engagement will dive deeper into specific target areas and projects based on the criteria approved by Metro Council in December.

Next meeting:

Council Retreat

Thursday, October 11: 11 a.m. - noon

Location: Blue Lake Park, Chinook Shelter

Wednesday, October 17: After NACA meeting

Tour: TBD

Potential parks and nature bond measure

Working lands engagement report | Fall 2018



Completed by: Nellie McAdams, McAdams Consulting LLC, summarized by Ryan Ruggiero, Metro

Audience overview:

Metro's contractor interviewed 25 individuals about Metro's potential parks and nature bond measure. Interviewees were selected because they had informed opinions about how a potential bond measure could benefit agricultural communities and conservation on agricultural land. Interviewees lived in and/or served all three counties. Thirteen individuals were farmers (three of whom served in leadership positions on farm bureau chapters or the Oregon Cattlemen's Association), three represented nongovernmental organizations, and nine represented soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), including one farmer SWCD director. The contractor interviewed representatives of all three SWCDs in Metro's jurisdiction with land preservation programs (this excluded West Multnomah SWCD, which has no land preservation program). The contractor also compiled a list of 66 agricultural stakeholders in Metro's three counties whom Metro could contact for future outreach.

Engagement format:

Metro's contractor conducted 18 interviews, each with one to three interviewees. Most interviews were conducted in-person at the interviewee's home or place of work. However, due to busy summer schedules, some interviews with farmers were conducted via telephone.

Engagement point people:

This engagement project was conducted by Nellie McAdams of McAdams Consulting LLC. Metro staff leading this effort were Ryan Ruggiero, Heather Nelson Kent and Dan Moeller.

Key priorities identified for potential bond measure:

Protection of farmland and farming activity

- The most productive agricultural land: Prioritize the protection of farmland with prime agricultural soils as identified in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's report of foundational agricultural land.
- Protected farmland should always remain available for agricultural production: Metro should ensure that agricultural production is always *possible* on its farmland acquisitions and urged Metro to maintain the water rights and infrastructure on farmland acquisitions.
- Land with actual threat of development: Prioritize the protection of farmland and natural areas that could potentially be lost to development, either imminent or not. Reconsider protection of lands in the floodplain (e.g. wetlands) that could not be developed.
- Large blocks of land close to urban area, but not necessarily large parcels: Use Metro bond funds to protect large, close but not necessarily adjoining blocks of farmland, instead of seeking individual parcels of a particular size.

Tools for investment and protection

- Where significant conservation investments have already been made on private land: SWCDs view easements as a way to permanently "lock in" the benefits of their temporary restoration projects on private land. As they explain, when land is developed, prior taxpayer-funded investments in the conservation of that property are lost forever.

Potential parks and nature bond measure

Working lands engagement report | Fall 2018

- Easements v. fee simple: Most interviewees preferred easements over fee title acquisitions because:
 - Private landowners are perceived as more invested in mitigating water, wildlife and weed issues than public entities, landlords or tenants
 - Private landowners are also perceived as being more likely to keep their farmland in agricultural production than public entities
 - Interviewees felt that it was fundamentally unfair that public and nonprofit owners are not required to pay property taxes (although some do so voluntarily)
 - Metro should not compete with farmers in already competitive real estate markets
 - Interviewees believed that fee title acquisitions deplete limited bond funds more quickly than easements.
- Interviewees supported fee title ownership if it helped farmers access affordable farmland, for example via incubators, long-term “ground leases,” “lease-to-own” arrangements, tenancy of large parcels by multiple small farm operations, or subleases coordinated by nonprofits on land held in fee title.
- Fund “buy-protect-sell” transactions where the land is purchased, protected with a working land easement and sold to a local farmer at a price discounted by the value of the easement (this is current Metro policy in several target areas).
- Distribution of bond funding: Distribute the funds roughly equally between the three counties and consult with community leaders before identifying and prioritizing parcels to be protected under the parks and nature bond program.
- Distribution of Metro funds to local entities for implementation: Contract maintenance to local entities with hands-on experience managing conservation projects on agricultural land (e.g. SWCDs and landowners).
- Institute a competitive grant program for land trusts, SWCDs and city parks programs (like Lake Oswego, which owns Luscher Farm) to acquire easements and property to further farmland protection goals.

Management of existing and future natural resources areas

- Effective management of acquisitions: Address flooding and wildlife damage, and remove weeds on all existing and new acquisitions.
- Synergies between natural and agricultural lands: Protect “mixed use” properties that contain both productive farmland *and* significant natural areas.
- High quality, rare habitats without other funding sources: While there are ample funding sources to preserve wetlands, few sources exist for upland restoration such as oak savanna.

Key concerns identified about potential bond measure:

Perceived impacts of Metro ownership and management on agriculture

- Minimizing adverse effects on neighboring properties: Killin Wetlands was the most commonly cited example of how management strategies or lack thereof impact neighboring properties and their agricultural operations.

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- Utilizing trusted land managers with practical experience: In the case of Killin Wetlands, there was a general sense that Metro experts lacked direct experience with flooding issues and that the practical advice of local experts was dismissed.
- Leasing to “hobby farms”: Interviewees cited concerns about properties they claimed did not farm for profit and used the property primarily for recreation.
- Public access: Farmers expressed concern that public access to Metro properties in rural areas could lead to vandalism, arson, theft, fewer wildlife, increased traffic on rural roads, and increased liability risks due to injuries or right-to-farm issues raised by trespassers and park visitors. While interviewees feared potential trespass issues, some stated that damage from trespassers was rare.
- Acquire properties designed for access to nature near concentrations of diverse populations, inside or near the urban growth boundary. This would also help alleviate traffic and right-to-farm issues in rural areas. Wherever they are located, there should be parking, outreach and easy-to-find maps or an App directing the public to Metro properties that allow public access.

Metro as a real estate market participant

- Impacts of Metro’s strategy to create corridors on protected properties: Creating trail networks and wildlife corridors along adjoining properties is a good use of bond funds for natural areas and public access.
- While interviewees did not fear that Metro would use eminent domain to acquire inholdings along corridors, they feared that Metro would pay inflated prices to acquire keystone properties, which would then affect comparable sales for local appraisals, landowner expectations of sales price, farmers’ ability to afford nearby land and ultimately the viability of farm enterprises and the local farm economy.
- Use of funding outside Metro boundaries: Some Washington County interviewees expressed frustration that bond funding was spent outside of Metro’s boundaries in communities where the residents did not vote on the measure. Some felt that the parks and natural areas program was something that is done to them rather than for them.
- Most interviewees approved of the use of Metro funds outside Metro boundaries if the rural community (and not just Metro constituents) perceived the investments as benefitting them. However, almost more important to these interviewees than receiving a benefit, is to perceive that Metro is genuinely interested in their needs and is engaging them to co-design a program that effectively meets those needs.
- Value of easements: Farmers preferred simple easements that stripped only development rights and had few additional restrictions.

Outreach

- Lack of effective outreach: Many interviewees had not heard much about prior bond measures aside from rumors about specific projects. They felt that, because they live outside of Metro’s boundaries, Metro’s outreach about the measure was targeted to Metro’s urban residents and failed to reach them. Some interviewees stated that, when they did receive communications, they dismissed them out-of-hand as probably being intended for Metro constituents and not them.

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Key themes on racial equity:

Convening and consultation

- Interviewees recommended that Metro first ask diverse communities what their conservation and land preservation goals are, and then create and implement a plan to achieve those goals. In general, interviewees noted that it is easier to implement DEI strategies for conservation services than land acquisitions.

Improving access to farmland and other resources

- Landowners with limited resources cannot split the cost or front the initial payments: If Metro funds landowners directly for conservation stewardship projects, Metro should pay limited-resource landowners 100 percent of the cost of conservation projects up front.
- While agricultural landowners are not currently a diverse demographic, interviewees noted that an increasing number of first-generation farmers, non-white farmers, first-generation Americans and women are attempting to access farmland. They noted that easements reduce the cost of land, making it more affordable to the buyer.
- Land held in fee title can reduce the cost of accessing this land if it is used for incubator farms, ground leases, lease-to-own, cooperative tenancy and sub-leases from nonprofits such as Adelante Mujeres or SWCDs that own or manage farmland. Metro should prioritize socially disadvantaged farmers in such sales or leases.
- Diverse or socially disadvantaged farm purchasers or tenants tend to seek properties in or near urban growth boundaries where they tend to live and hold second jobs. Adelante Mujeres wondered if Metro funds could pay for farm infrastructure (e.g. a shared tool shed on a property with multiple tenants), and expressed interest in using urban parcels for community gardens.

Areas of disagreement within this audience:

- General perception of Metro: Interviewees all acknowledged Metro as the most influential entity in the North Willamette Valley for land preservation, stating “There’s never a conversation about land conservation that doesn’t include Metro, which is good and bad.”
- Proximity to UGBs: Interviewees held mixed views on whether funds from a Metro bond measure should be used to protect lands near or within an urban growth boundary or within an urban reserve.
- Greenbelt: While several interviewees did not want to limit farmers’ options to develop their land, many more urged Metro to proactively plan and preserve a greenbelt to limit the expansion of urban footprints. Interviewees argued that, just because the Valley can no longer supply 100 percent of its own food, Metro should still have a priority to guarantee *some* local food production and to protect the land necessary to do so.

Suggestions for future engagement with this audience:

- Metro should initiate at least a two-year strategy to engage with communities, actively listen to the expertise and priorities of landowners and service providers and commit to collaborating with them.
- Invite local stakeholders to the table from day one, before any plan that they are being asked to discuss has been finalized, and use their input to shape plans. Rather than using brochures or

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mailings, which landowners do not trust or find irrelevant, Metro representatives should have in-person dialogues with local agricultural and rural community groups – even just once a year.

- Model future engagement after this process, with representatives directly engaging the working lands community, listening to affected parties and using input to effect Metro’s plans.