

# Memo



Metro

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## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide examples and guidance in support of the 2019 parks and nature bond criteria (adopted through Metro Council Resolution 19-4988).

The overarching bond criteria which governs programs and investments, includes the following language related to anti-displacement “Include strategies to prevent or mitigate displacement and/or gentrification resulting from bond investments.”

This document expands upon the bond resolution language adopted by Metro Council by providing context, strategies and best practices around the topics of gentrification and anti-displacement. This document cannot contain all relevant information about these topics, but can be used as a tool to support and strengthen collaborative conversations with partners and community members. In addition, preventing displacement must be an iterative, community-guided and –informed process. Throughout engagement around the bond and other local/regional investments, ask community if other anti-displacement strategies should be considered as well as which strategies should be prioritized on efforts to do no harm and lift up communities.

## Background

Throughout the engagement process of Metro’s parks and nature bond, many community members and partners have expressed concerns regarding the potential for gentrification and displacement of under-resourced communities in response to public investments in parks and nature. Gentrification occurs when a neighborhood with attractive qualities... has a relatively low value. This disconnect between potential value and current value results from historic disinvestment by public and private sectors. The area becomes desirable to higher-income households and/or investors and there are changes in the housing market; as demand rises for the neighborhood, higher-income households outbid low-income residents for housing, and new development and economic activity begins to cater to higher-income residents. Lower-income households and/or households of color migrate out of the neighborhood and new in-migrants change the demographics of the neighborhood. (Bates 2013)

Displacement occurs when any household is forced to move from its residence by conditions which affect the dwelling or its immediate surroundings, and which: 1) are beyond the household's reasonable ability to control or prevent; 2) occur despite the household's having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy; and 3) make continued occupancy by that household impossible, hazardous or unaffordable. (George and Eunice Grier, *Urban Displacement*. 1978)

In February of 2021, Metro completed a [literature review on gentrification and trails](#). The review sought to understand whether trail investments do in fact lead to gentrification and displacement. Staff also wanted to understand what characteristics of park or trail investments are more likely to lead to gentrification, as well as what mitigation or anti-displacement strategies might be used to buffer communities from potential negative impacts. Findings found that clear correlations don’t always exist.

However, there was some evidence that long linear parks and trails in urban areas are more likely to lead to gentrification and displacement than other park investments.

The parks and nature leadership team provided the additional considerations and context to help Metro parks and nature staff understand how this particular bond wide criteria could help shape bond programs and investments

- Outcomes

- **Synergy:** As a contributing element to community stability, parks investments are synergistic with other elements (e.g. housing, transportation, education, food, etc.), working in a concerted effort to build community resiliency.
- **Awareness:** There is a heightened awareness by Parks and Nature staff and regional partners of the conditions and unintended actions that lead to displacement and/or gentrification, which ultimately assists in understanding possible mitigation actions the region can collectively carry out.
- **Community stability:** BIPOC communities have the necessary support systems to build long-term resiliency against the threats of displacement and/or gentrification that may unintentionally result from bond investments.
- **Prevention:** Regional investments, including the Parks and Nature bond, actively prevent further harm to communities who have experienced displacement and/or gentrification from government spending in the past.

- Examples of practice

- **Region-wide coordination:** Metro and regional partners practice community stability strategies that coordinate regional investments to strengthen impact. These regional investments include the Parks and Nature bond and levy, the Housing Bond, and the Supportive Housing Services funding measure, which heighten the importance of Metro's Regional Investment Strategy.
- **Assessment:** Prior to investment, encourage and utilize practices that seek to understand conditions that may contribute to displacement and/or gentrification to better understand impact. Economic assessments are an example of such practice.

The table below describes a set of anti-displacement strategies that were developed following the gentrification and trails literature review. These strategies fall along a spectrum from those that act as mitigation measures to those that support resilient communities. Many mitigation measures are less complex to implement, are shorter in duration, and oftentimes are site specific.

Many of the strategies listed below that support resilient communities are typically more complex, require cross-departmental or inter-agency coordination and partnering with external partners, are broader in geographic reach and require investment over an extended period of time. Anti-displacement researchers have indicated that the most successful efforts to address gentrification and displacement utilize a combination of several strategies.

### Guiding Considerations

The University of Minnesota collected a set of guiding considerations for public investments in parks and green infrastructure for policy makers, public agencies and regulators, planners and project managers.

These include:

- Prepare for the long-term. Account for the time, energy, and expenses necessary for long-term effective implementation.
- Public sector enforcement is needed for many anti-displacement policies to be effective.
- The public sector is generally not set up to collaborate efficiently across different agencies, which means creative thinking is needed and pathways are possible.
- Qualitative data is still data. Emotive responses to regulatory measures are useful and necessary and should be considered when analyzing, measuring, and implementing public programs.
- “Placemaking” must contend with the principles of “place keeping” when it comes to gentrification. Be considerate and uplift the labor and emotional investment into a place. Be open to an iterative process.
- Incorporate justice into the execution of a project beyond procedures. Question who owns and profits from its outcomes.
- “Each project is inevitably shaped by historical and ongoing structural conditions.” (Klein et. al)

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE (INCLUDING SOME UNDERWAY AT METRO)
<p><u>Support Coalition Building</u> Assist in the growth of partnerships that can create alliances, identify mutual goals and values, identify financial support, and build relationships with ambassadors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support nature-based activities and gatherings led by and for communities of color.</li> <li>• Metro’s Park Equity Advisory Committees includes diverse community membership</li> </ul>
<p><u>Community Engagement and Empowerment</u> Equitably engage community in selecting park, nature and trail projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek opportunities to share or shift power to community in decision-making.</li> <li>• Engage black, Indigenous and communities of color and report on how input is incorporated or how your agency responded to input received. Collect demographic information on who participates and record how that changes over time.</li> <li>• Metro’s Parks Equity Advisory Committee provides input and oversight on department goals, processes and spending.</li> <li>• Community can directly affect park priorities and spending decisions through participatory budgeting.</li> </ul>

<p><u>Inclusive Planning and Design</u> Encourage equitable participation of those who may be impacted by parks and nature investments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek opportunities to share or shift power to community in decision-making.</li> <li>• Engage black, Indigenous and communities of color and report on how input is incorporated or how your agency responded to input received.</li> <li>• Emphasize local culture, needs and priorities in project outcomes.</li> <li>• Incorporate Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) in development projects. A CBA is a contract signed by community groups and a developer or government agency that requires the developer to provide specific amenities and/or mitigations to the local community or neighborhood.</li> <li>• More information about meaningful community engagement can be found in this toolkit here: <a href="http://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/parks-and-nature-bond-measure/local-share">www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/parks-and-nature-bond-measure/local-share</a></li> </ul>
<p><u>Provide Diversified Programs</u> Support diversified programming at parks, trails and natural areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailor programs such as educational tours, gatherings and volunteer opportunities led by and for communities of color, towards black, Indigenous and people of color communities (BIPOC).</li> <li>• Explore opportunities within your agency to offer grants to community partners for BIPOC led nature-based activities. Examples of projects funded by Metro’s Community Partnerships program include funding for community events, nature programming activities, connecting community with park planners and decision makers, the exploration of nature-based career pathways, and hands-on education for people of all ages and backgrounds.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Systems Thinking and Data-Informed Decisions</u> Identify communities most at risk of displacement in the region. Prioritize investments in communities expecting park, nature and trail investments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify areas at risk of gentrification and displacement. In Metro’s planning work, we use as Equity Focus Areas (defined by high rates of people of color, limited English proficiency and low-income residents) in your community. With the help of community, assess areas for needed anti-displacement investments. <a href="http://regionalbarometer.oregonmetro.gov/datasets/drcMetro::all-equity-focus-areas/about">regionalbarometer.oregonmetro.gov/datasets/drcMetro::all-equity-focus-areas/about</a></li> <li>• Augment data with qualitative input, or personal experiences, to be collected during engagement processes.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Support Small Businesses</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to contract with COBID certified businesses in order to benefit the financial livelihood and a long-term impact on the wealth</li> </ul>

<p>Protect locally owned small businesses through direct contracting.</p>	<p>position of contractors, workers, and businesses who have not benefited in the past from government spending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance over time in implementation of COBID utilization and relationships with COBID contractors (see more detail <a href="#">here</a>).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Build relationships with businesses within communities of color to create access to bond projects.</li> <li>○ Build capacity of small businesses to become COBID certified, retain certification, win and successfully complete projects by providing technical assistance throughout the procurement and contract cycle.</li> <li>○ Establish numeric targets for participation, along with systems for tracking and reporting.</li> <li>○ Create strong, long-lasting resources to partner with and support COBID firms.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><u>Workforce Development</u> Pursue workforce development programs to develop job skills within the community around investment areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide pre-apprentice and apprentice to journey level career experience for women and people of color with park development projects. The Metro Council adopted the Constructed Career Pathways Regional Framework, which offers a comprehensive strategy for creating career pathways for women and people of color into the construction industry in order to meet the demand for a skilled workforce. Metro’s Construction Career Pathways Framework includes:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Workforce Diversity Goals</li> <li>○ A minimum of 20% of total work hours in each apprenticeable trade performed by state-registered apprentices;</li> <li>○ A minimum of 14% of total work hours performed by women - both journey and apprentice-level workers;</li> <li>○ A minimum of 25% total work hours performed by persons of color - both journey and apprentice level workers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Youth Ecology Corps programs that engage at risk youth in careers in parks and natural resources are a meaningful way to contribute to workforce development.</li> </ul>

<p><u>Financially Support Resilient Communities</u> Allocate a portion of development budgets to community support services and affordable housing programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities within your agency to allocate portions of acquisition and capital improvement costs to community support services and affordable housing programs.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities within your agency to leverage housing and other funds with investments in parks and trails.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Private Sector Housing Policies</u> Support anti-displacement housing and land use policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities within your agency to support anti-displacement housing policies including: inclusionary zoning, density bonuses, developer impact fees, and rent control.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Homeowner and Renter Programs</u> Support programs that make it easier for low-income homeowners and renters to stay in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities within your agency to support such programs. Examples of effective homeowner and renter programs include: anti-eviction protections, renter education workshops, and property tax freezes or down payment assistance for low-income homeowners.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Support Housing Organizations</u> Invest in housing trust funds, community land trusts and other forms of land banking and value capture mechanisms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities within your agency to support such organizations. Examples include tax-increment financing that generates funds for affordable housing.</li> <li>• While Parks and Nature bond funds cannot be spent on affordable housing uses, consider opportunities connect or co-locate parks or natural areas investments/assets with affordable housing.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Cross Sectional Planning</u> Coordinate affordable housing, transportation, and park, nature and trail investments in order to leverage investments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metro’s Parks and Nature team is collaborating with Metro’s housing bond and supportive housing services teams to share information and resources explore potential opportunities for coordination.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities within your agency to coordinate with transportation, planning and/or housing teams and for park projects to consider regional housing and transportation investments when evaluating and selecting park, nature and trail projects.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities within your agency for housing, planning and transportation programs to consider access to parks, nature and trails when allocating investments.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Other</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preventing displacement must be an iterative, community-guided and –informed process. Throughout engagement around the bond and other local/regional investments, ask community if other anti-displacement strategies should be considered as well as which strategies should be prioritized.</li> </ul>