

# Spring 2024 Parks and Nature quarterly update

Covering bond activities and investments from January–March 2024



## **BOND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMPLETED: January–March 2024**

**Staff have completed the following outreach across bond programs in the last quarter:**

- April 4 open house about large scale community visions program hosted about 35 individuals representing a range of organizations
- Blue Lake Park partner cohort held three monthly meetings to support development of three draft alternative concept plans
- Conversations with ten park providers about their local share priorities
- Protect and restore team met with seven park providers to discuss priorities for land acquisition.
- Protect and restore team met with 48 landowners (14 new) to discuss potential acquisition opportunities.
- The grant review committee for the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants met once to

review submitted pre-applications.

## **BOND REPORTING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES COMPLETED**

[A set of infographics](#) are posted on Metro’s website to visualize bond progress over time to the public. These are meant to serve as a compliment to the [storytelling](#) that highlights specific projects and bond wide progress.

In July 2023, the [Metro auditor](#) presented an [audit of the early work of the 2019 parks and nature bond](#) to the Metro Council. In September 2023, the Metro Auditor presented the audit and its findings to the Natural Areas Oversight Committee.

## **BOND ACTIVITIES AND INVESTMENTS COMPLETED: January–March 2024**

**Protect and restore land activities from January–March 2024**  
[oregonmetro.gov/protect-and-restore-land](https://oregonmetro.gov/protect-and-restore-land)

The team continues to ramp up outreach to landowners across the region to create a pipeline of opportunities for acquisition in alignment with the targets and goals approved by the Metro Council in 2022. Though the real estate market remains challenging, the team is seeing results of its consistent outreach to landowners across the region. As of end of March 2024, the team has completed 21 acquisitions for 162 acres across 15 target areas. The team is also adding a new real estate specialist.

See more specific information about acquisitions in the [appendix of this report](#).

## **Local share activities completed from January–March 2024**

[oregonmetro.gov/localshare](https://oregonmetro.gov/localshare)

The local share team is working with the region’s park providers to submit priority projects for bond local share funding. Metro is finalizing an intergovernmental agreement with the City of Tigard for the Steve Street project, which

will design and construct a 1.4-acre neighborhood park connecting Steve Street and Southwest 84th Ave, making a total of IGAs with eight park providers for \$26 million in project awards. The team is also in conversations about project submittals with a range of other park providers and received submittals from City of Milwaukie and Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District.

**Walking and biking trails activities completed from January–March 2024**

Since Council approved [12 trail grant awards for \\$19.5 million](#) across the region, the team has finalized six intergovernmental agreements of the twelve project awards, which will allow project work to advance and submittal of reimbursement requests and is close to finalizing three other intergovernmental agreements.

**Take care of Metro parks activities completed from January–March 2024**

Progress continues on health, safety and accessibility improvements at sites in Metro’s portfolio including Blue Lake and Oxbow and Lone Fir’s Cultural Heritage and Healing Garden

In order to complete a set of infrastructure improvements safely and efficiently, Blue Lake Regional Park is closed to the public until late spring 2024. The disc golf course remains open.

Staff are working to advance design and engineering work for infrastructure improvements at Oxbow Park.

Metro is working with community members to create a memorial to honor untold stories at the historic Lone Fir Cemetery in southeast Portland. See more detail on the status of all bond funded take care of Metro parks projects in the [appendix](#).

**Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants activities completed from January–March 2024**

The solicitation for a second round of grants resulted in eight pre-applications submitted. A community review committee met and have recommended to invite six of those projects to submit a full application by May 2024.

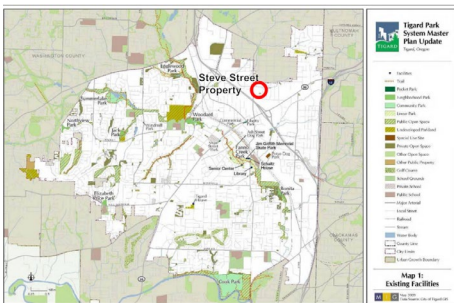
In addition, staff have almost completed funding agreements for the [\\$2.7 million of Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants](#) awarded by the Metro Council this summer for seven projects.

**Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice grants activities completed from January–March 2024**

In February, the Metro Council approved over \$2 million in grant awards funding to 15 projects in western Washington County that were identified and shaped by the community. The Community Choice grant program is designed to give community members the power to imagine, design, and vote on what parks and nature projects they’d like to see in their communities, and engagement for this process has been driven by a focus on centering community members in the communities of interest in District 4.

**Large scale community visions activities completed from January–March 2024**

Solicitation for up to \$10 million in funding kicked off in April 2024. To generate interest about the funding opportunity, the program team hosted an in person and virtual open house in early April. Staff are currently working with the three entities designated by the Metro Council [as pilot round large scale community visions projects](#) to ensure readiness to finalize an eventual funding award.



Map, planned location and plans for Tigard’s Steve Street Park.



## Status of bond funded Metro parks capital projects (take care of Metro parks program)

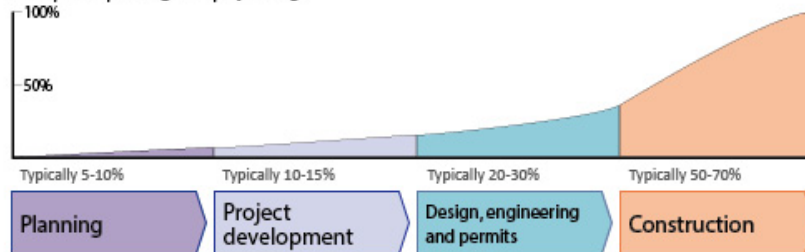
### Take care of Metro parks projects

Project status March 2024



Planning	Project development	Design, engineering and permits	Construction	Complete planning project	Complete built projects
<p>ADA Transition Plan refinement status: scoping est. construction: na - this project will inform future construction projects</p> <p>Blue Lake Regional Park renovation status: community engagement milestone 1 complete est. construction: 2026/27</p> <p>Willamette Cove Master Plan status: managed by GMMP est. construction: unknown</p> <p>Willamette Cove Remedial Design Remedial Action status: managed by GMMP est. construction: unknown</p>	<p>Lone Fir Cultural heritage and healing garden status: feasibility analysis est. construction: 2025/26</p> <p>Oxbow road improvements status: review of conceptual design alternatives. construction: 2025/26</p>	<p>Marine Drive Trail status: 60% design est. construction: summer 2024</p> <p>Oxbow potable water distribution status: 30% design est. construction: 2024-26</p> <p>Oxbow welcome center water system status: 30% design est. construction: 2024-26</p> <p>St Johns Prairie trail design status: almost 90% design est. construction: unknown due to WPES bridge replacement</p> <p>St Johns Preload est. construction: Jan 2025</p>	<p>Blue Lake - sanitary status: under construction</p> <p>Blue Lake - water system ph 2 status: under construction</p> <p>Blue Lake - operations and maintenance facility status: under construction</p> <p>Blue Lake - dock demo and repair status: under contract construction: Nov 2023</p> <p>Graham Oaks - ADA improvements status: under construction</p> <p>Oxbow well refurbishment status: contracting est. construction: 2024</p> <p>Newell Creek Canyon south perimeter fence status: Contracting est. construction: 2023/24</p>	<p>Blue Lake - utility and facility assessment status: planning complete</p> <p>Oxbow hydrologic assessment status: planning complete</p> <p>Oxbow road and water analysis status: concept work plan complete</p>	<p>Chehalem Ridge nature park status: park open</p> <p>Newell Creek Canyon nature park status: park open</p> <p>Oxbow welcome ctr. generator status: operational</p> <p>Oxbow welcome ctr ph2 - maintenance area status: operational</p> <p>Oxbow - ADA Boat launch parking status: substantially complete - in closeout</p> <p>BLP Demo - buildings status: complete</p> <p>BLP water sys ph 1 status: complete</p>

Anticipated spending each project stage



FY24 Q3

Projects are fully or partially funded by 2019 bond.



**List of capital restoration planned to be funded by the 2019 parks and nature bond, Spring 2024**

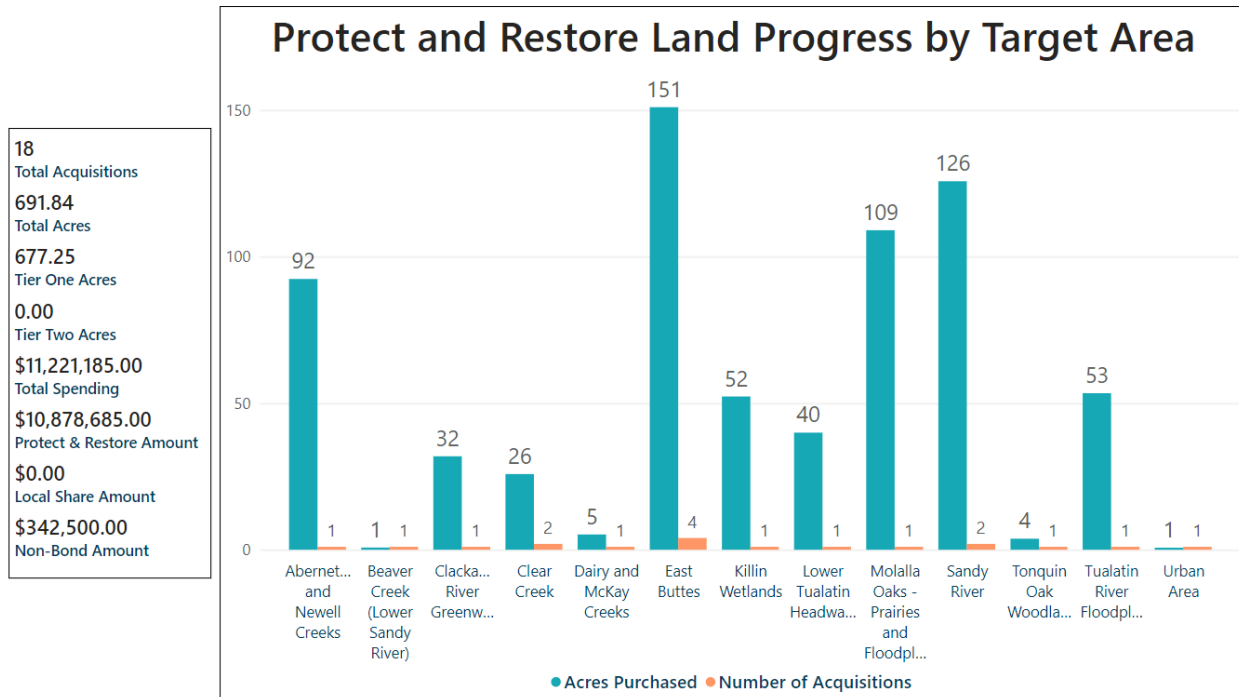
- *Project prioritized based on feedback received from community, partners and stakeholders during bond development (pre-2019) and bond refinement (post-2020)*
- *Future fiscal years will likely identify additional capital restoration projects to be funded by the 2019 parks and nature bond*

<b>Project name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Anticipated timing of project construction</b>
<b>Roberts Bridge Stream Restoration</b>	The project is located at the Upper Johnson Creek Natural Area in Gresham, Oregon. Goals include the removal of a one-lane vehicular bridge over Johnson Creek paved asphalt driveways, including road fill and base gravel, concrete, and other debris. Restoration actions include the installation of large wood into the stream and floodplain and placement of boulders in-stream. Outcomes will include enhanced water quality, fish habitat and floodplain connectivity.	2024
<b>Beaver Creek Stream Restoration</b>	The project is at the South Beaver Creek Natural Area on Beaver Creek in Troutdale. Restoration includes actions that benefit water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife. This project is being developed to support broader native fish recovery efforts by the Beaver Creek and Sandy River Partnerships. These restoration actions were identified in 2015 during a feasibility study of potential projects on Metro lands along lower Beaver Creek. Restoration work includes removal of an instream weir (small dam), placement of large logs by helicopter, removal of debris from the stream, and stabilizing a stormwater outfall.	2024
<b>Coffee Lake Wetlands Restoration</b>	A large and highly visible wetland restoration project at the Coffee Lake Creek Wetlands Natural Area in Wilsonville. The project will improve wildlife habitat, water quality, floodplain connectivity by dewatering and re-routing two ditches, filling the ditches, grading, and lowering a large central wetland, excavating ponds of varying depths with shallow connector swales, utilizing fill to create hummocks, installation of wood features, and re-wetting the restored wetland, across 31.5 acres.	2024
<b>Quamash Prairie McFee Creek Crossing</b>	This project is located at the Quamash Prairie Natural Area in Washington County. The project will replace a failed culvert structure with a new structure that minimizes impact to riparian and aquatic natural resources. Project will ensure continued safe access for the Indigenous Community and Metro staff to the site.	2025
<b>North Fork Deep Creek Restoration</b>	The project is located at the North Fork Deep Creek Natural Area on Deep Creek and North Fork Deep Creek in Boring. Restoration work includes actions that benefit water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife. Project is being developed to support broader native fish recovery efforts by the Clackamas River Partnership. Work includes placement of large logs and brush into the stream by helicopter.	2026

Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–March 31, 2024)

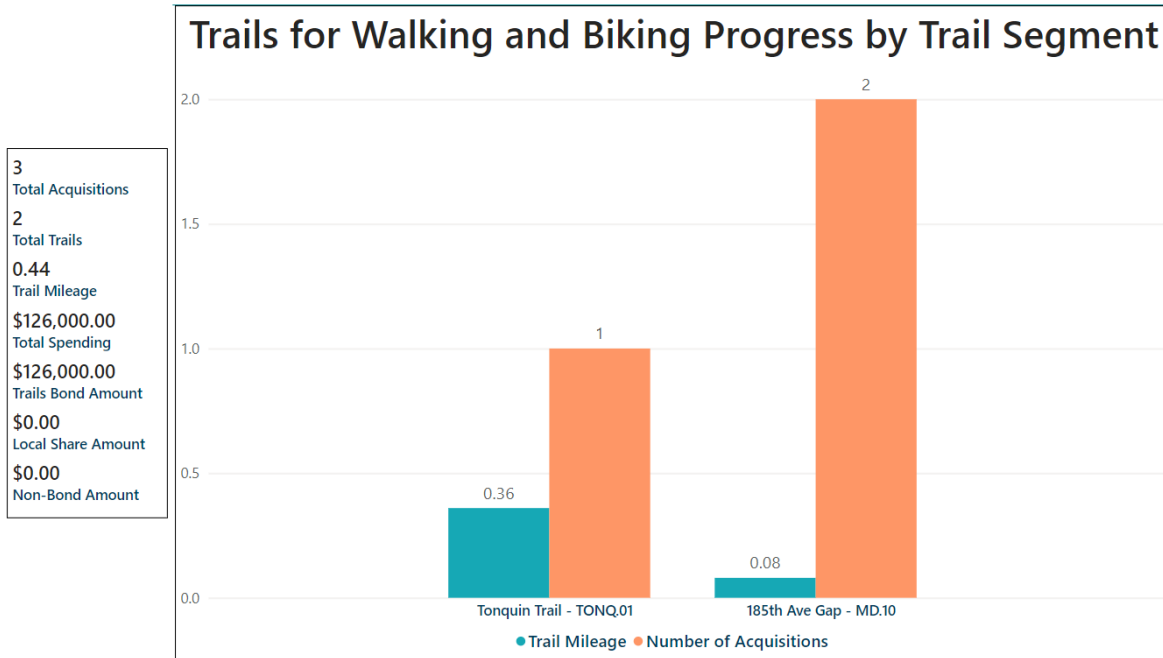
Acquisitions to date by target area and trail segment

Through the policy established in the [2019 parks and nature bond measure](#) and the [target area refinement plans](#) the Metro Council has directed staff to acquire properties in 24 regional target areas and 39 trail corridors that meet the refinement plan goals. Each property varies in size and other features.



The first chart displays the both the number of properties purchased and acres protected in each target area through the Protect and Restore Land program over the lifetime of the 2019 bond. The second chart displays both the number of trail properties purchased and mileage in each trail corridor. Through March 31, 2024, Metro staff have acquired 18 properties totaling 691.84 acres across 13 target areas, along with three trail acquisitions. This number will expand over time as more properties are purchased across all target areas and trail corridors.

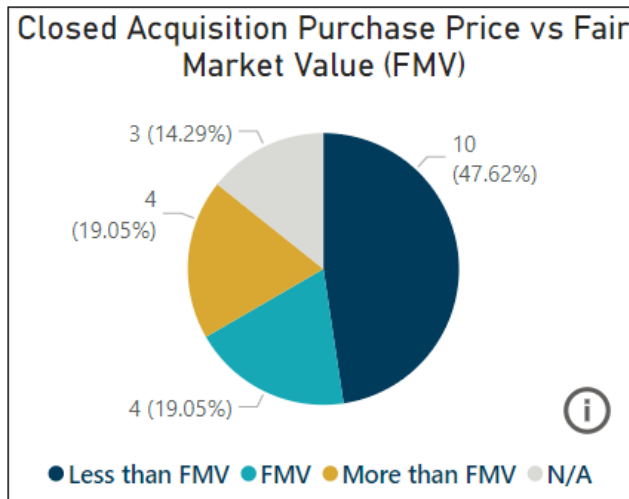
Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–March 31, 2024)



### Purchase price vs. market value

Most properties purchased to date were at or under fair market value, or an appraisal was not required (i.e., the purchase price was less than \$50,000). This includes all purchases funded through the Protect and Restore Land as well as Create Trails for Walking and Biking programs. The Metro Council may direct staff to purchase property at any price, but through the policy established in the Natural Areas Work Plan, the Metro Council has delegated authority to staff to acquire properties for fair market value as supported by an independent appraisal (with the exception of properties purchased for less than

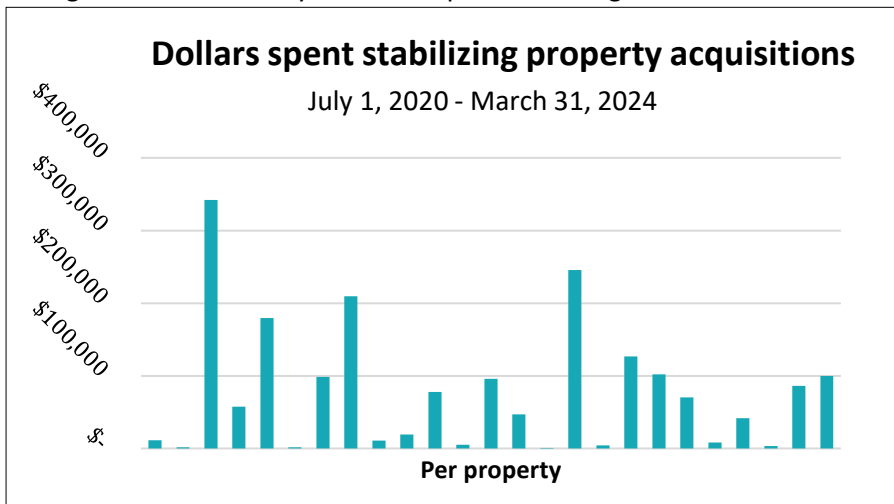
\$50,000, which do not require an appraisal). The Chief Operating Officer may purchase a property for up to \$100,000 or 10% more than the value established by an appraisal provided certain conditions are met. The executive steering committee has recommended that staff bring more negotiations to the COO to consider a purchase price within \$100,000 or 10% of the appraised value, so the percentage of properties purchased above FMV is expected to grow over time.



**Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–March 31, 2024)**

### Cost of stabilization to date

Stabilization is one of the four program activities eligible for Protect and Restore Land funds. Stabilization is the phase of management that follows acquisition. During stabilization Metro uses bond funds to address threats that would otherwise compromise the values for which a new natural area is acquired. As no two properties are the same, or have the same conditions present, stabilization plans and costs will vary by property and the conditions present. Metro uses a function-based approach to identify and implement stabilization activities appropriate to each site. Function-based stabilization focuses on actions that protect high ecological function and shift currently degrading conditions to a positive trend leading to Metro to meeting the conservation objectives for which the property was purchased. Common stabilization actions include natural resource enhancement and property management and security actions. Important ecological functions addressed include key features such



as soil erosion control, habitat quality and trend, temperature and flow modification of streams, and public safety.

### Progress on climate resiliency

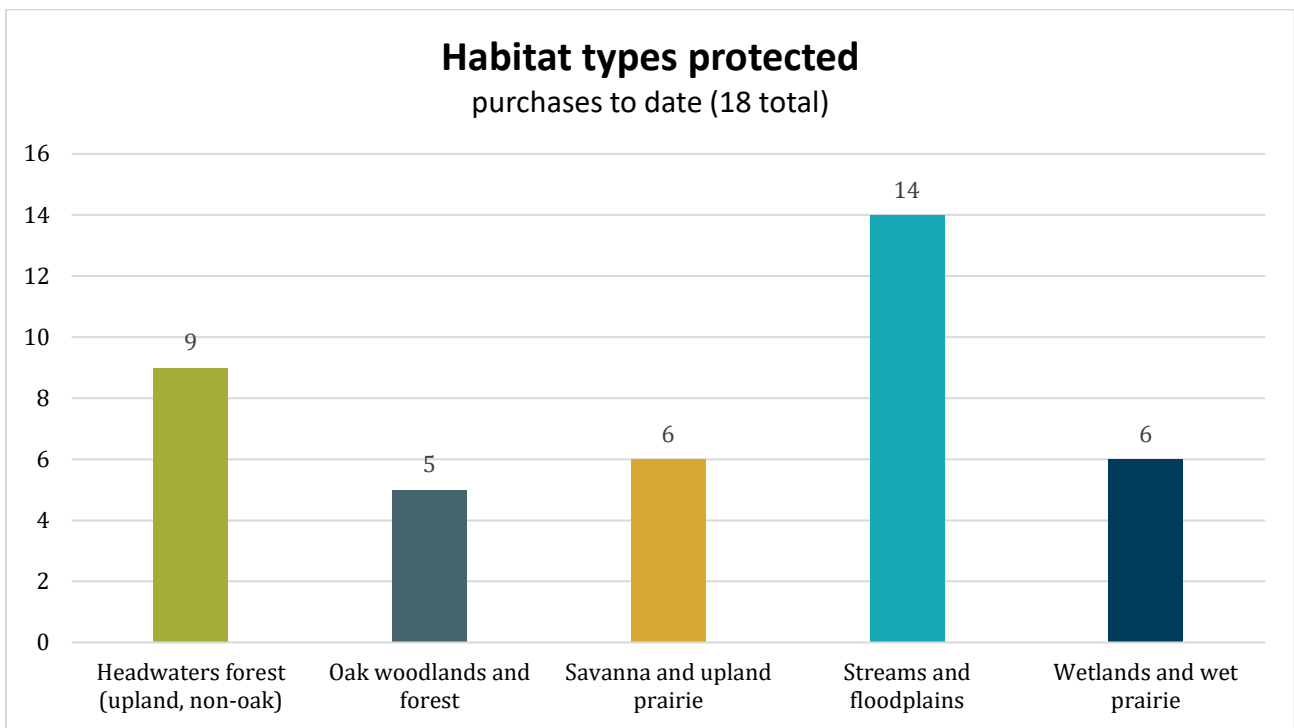
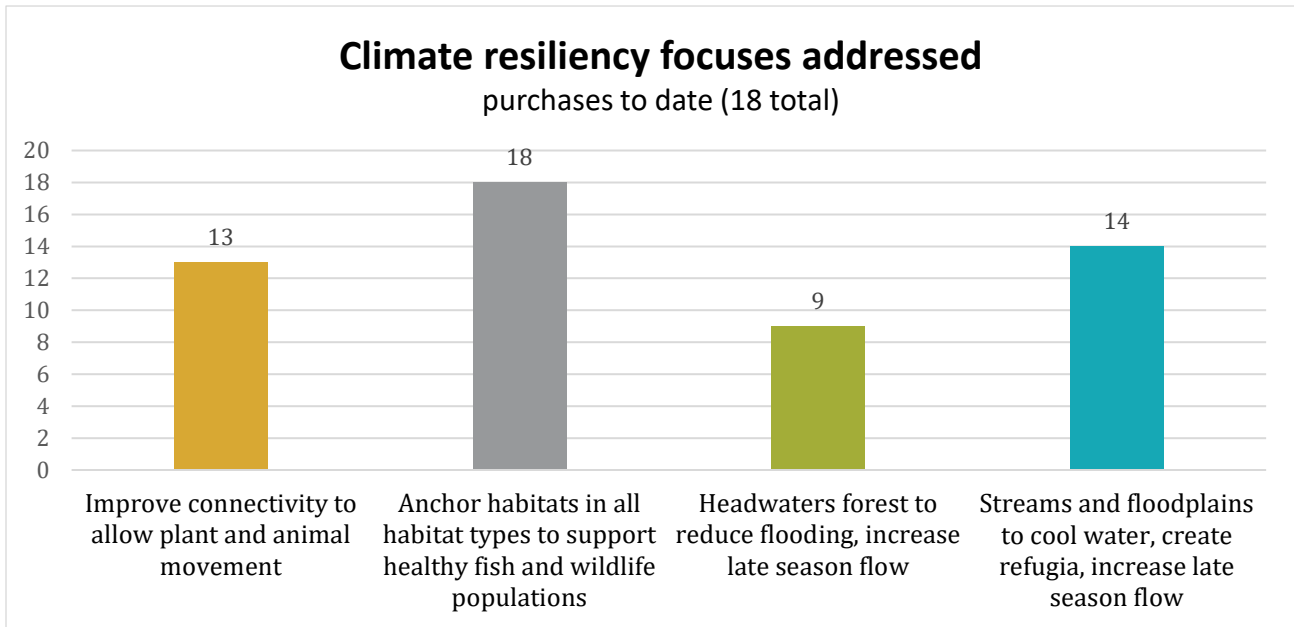
The 2019 bond measure prioritizes increasing the climate resilience of greater Portland’s natural systems. Climate resilience refers to the

ability of a system to withstand or recover from changes induced by a changing climate. The overarching strategies for increasing the resilience of natural areas and natural systems to climate-caused stresses are:

- Creating and managing large, healthy anchor habitat sites in all habitat types to support robust plant and animal populations.
- Improving overall habitat connectivity to allow plants and animals to move in response to changing conditions.
- Improving the ability of streams to absorb and store high flows and provide cold-water refugia by protecting, connecting, and restoring headwaters, wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains and stream habitats.

The charts below display how many properties purchased satisfied criteria aligned with these strategies in five primary habitat types. A property could have one or more features and/or habitat types present and may be represented multiple times.

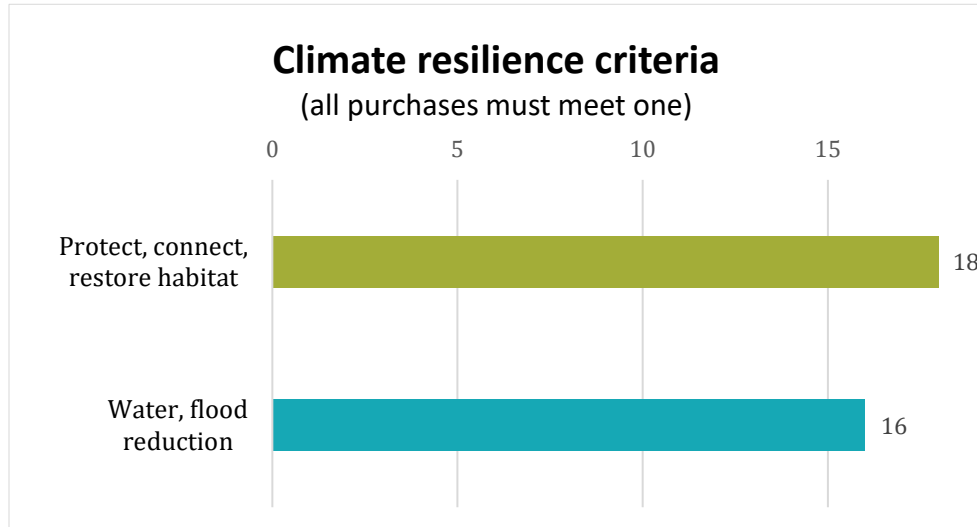
Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–March 31, 2024)





**Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–March 31, 2024)**

In addition to this more detailed analysis, the bond measure includes a specific requirement that all purchases funded by the bond must satisfy at least one climate resilience criterion listed in the bond measure. The two criterion that can be satisfied by property protection alone are shown in the chart below, along with the number of purchases that meet the criteria.



**Constraints**

Overall, the team is meeting acquisition goals in terms of transactions and dollars spent. We are seeing the groundwork laid over the past months and year from outreach transition into negotiations and closed transactions. Capacity is growing with two senior real estate specialists on the team and a recruitment firm on board to support hiring for one more position. An offer was extended to fill this position in early April, and the candidate has tentatively accepted. When the team is fully staffed, there will be three senior real estate specialists working on acquiring real estate for Metro, alongside a full-time team coordinator.

The team, working with the parks and trails planning team at Metro, continue to build relationships with local agency partners to better facilitate partnership and real estate transactions in the urban target area and regional trail network. Metro must be willing to work on the partner’s timeline and within their capacity to complete these purchases; these timelines can vary.

The market continues to be dynamic and challenging for off market transactions. The largest challenges in the market are still related to timelines and seller expectations of value – but Metro real estate staff are now also seeing impacts of low inventory and high interest rates on willing seller cultivation, i.e., the desire for people to sell their property and move. To overcome this barrier the real estate team is utilizing tools such as land use actions to purchase portions of property with conservation values while sellers retain ownership of portions with homes and other structures. However, land use actions add 4-6 months onto a transaction timeline.

PN bond financial reporting through March 31, 2024

2019 Parks and Nature Bond - Spend by Program Area						
	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	Total Spend
<b>Protect/Restore</b>						
Personnel	8,897	1,027,574	1,318,586	1,772,632	1,527,384	5,655,072
M&S or Capital	120,063	843,385	5,104,935	5,311,633	1,143,293	12,523,309
<b>Total</b>	<b>128,960</b>	<b>1,870,959</b>	<b>6,423,521</b>	<b>7,084,265</b>	<b>2,670,676</b>	<b>18,178,382</b>
<b>Take Care of Metro Parks</b>						
Personnel	8,897	642,133	1,334,500	1,199,311	876,934	4,061,775
M&S or Capital	221,847	3,051,112	2,279,728	2,820,384	8,954,470	17,327,541
<b>Total</b>	<b>230,744</b>	<b>3,693,245</b>	<b>3,614,228</b>	<b>4,019,694</b>	<b>9,831,404</b>	<b>21,389,316</b>
<b>Local Share</b>						
Personnel	29,397	213,678	240,033	236,912	197,201	917,221
M&S or Capital		2,464	2,492,200	1,616,171	2,775,310	6,886,145
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,397</b>	<b>216,142</b>	<b>2,732,233</b>	<b>1,853,083</b>	<b>2,972,511</b>	<b>7,803,366</b>
<b>Grants</b>						
Personnel	12,847	184,414	240,528	364,932	305,568	1,108,288
M&S or Capital		2,061	85,755	71,588	142,170	301,574
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,847</b>	<b>186,475</b>	<b>326,283</b>	<b>436,520</b>	<b>447,738</b>	<b>1,409,863</b>
<b>Trails</b>						
Personnel	8,489	243,278	233,358	313,024	209,643	1,007,792
M&S or Capital	3,825	818	148,071	17,165	43,886	213,766
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,314</b>	<b>244,096</b>	<b>381,429</b>	<b>330,189</b>	<b>253,530</b>	<b>1,221,558</b>
<b>Community Visions</b>						
Personnel	-	3,480	121,359	29,181	24,811	178,832
M&S or Capital	-	-	-	434	55	489
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,480</b>	<b>121,359</b>	<b>29,615</b>	<b>24,866</b>	<b>179,321</b>
<b>Total Program Spend</b>	<b>414,262</b>	<b>6,214,397</b>	<b>13,599,053</b>	<b>13,753,367</b>	<b>16,200,726</b>	<b>50,181,805</b>
<b>Admin</b>						
Personnel	100,692	555,696	591,933	647,919	497,834	2,394,073
M&S or Capital or Transfer	402,467	990,481	2,934,472	2,929,420	1,724,435	8,981,275
Personnel	10	330	395	-		735
M&S or Capital or Transfer	309,359	27,344	544,812	489,411	81,212	1,452,138
<b>Total</b>	<b>812,528</b>	<b>1,573,851</b>	<b>4,071,612</b>	<b>4,066,750</b>	<b>2,303,481</b>	<b>12,828,222</b>
<b>Total Bond Spend</b>	<b>1,226,790</b>	<b>7,788,248</b>	<b>17,670,665</b>	<b>17,820,117</b>	<b>18,504,207</b>	<b>63,010,026</b>
Administrative Spending as a % of Total Bond Spend	66.23%	20.21%	23.04%	23%	12%	

