Meeting:	Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Pilot Program Design and Review Committee Meeting #5
Date:	Wednesday March 2, 2022
Time:	4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
Place:	Zoom
Purpose:	Guidebook development
Outcome(s):	Develop the program Guidebook: Proposal Development and Community Vote

Recording: https://vimeo.com/688611068/48d089e6a6

Links: Process Goals Mural Board

Idea Collections Mural Board

Attendees

Committee Members
Kevin Hughes, he/him, City of Hillsboro Parks and Recreation Department
Alisa Chen, they/them, Grow Portland
Jairaj Singh, they/he, Unite Oregon
Blanca Gaytan Farfan, she/her, East County Rising Community Projects
Jeffrey Lee, he/him, (City of Portland, BES)
Theresa Huang, she/her, Urban Greenspaces Institute

Absent: *Anthony M. Bradley*

Staff
Amanda Hudson, Participatory Budgeting Oregon (PBO)
Humberto Marquez Mendes, Metro
Crista Gardner, Metro
Brandon Goldner, Metro
Gabrielle Brown, Metro (PSU Fellow)
Councilor Duncan Hwang
Allison Brown, JLA Public Involvement
Ariella Frishberg, JLA Public Involvement

Welcome and Introductions

Allison Brown, JLA Public Involvement, opened the meeting and reviewed Zoom logistics. Metro Councilor Duncan Hwang shared a land acknowledgement. Committee members and staff then introduced themselves and talked about a time when they saw or were part of an engagement process which resulted in change.

Participant Eligibility Discussion

Amanda Hudson, PBO, reviewed best practices for establishing participant eligibility. She facilitated an interactive poll discussion on what principles the committee would like to use when deciding who can participate.

What principles should be used when deciding who is eligible to participate (i.e. residency, connection to place, etc.)?

The group felt that the language should combine the statements of:
- Live, work, play, and/or pray in Metro's urban growth boundary
- Meaningful time spent present and future within Metro's boundaries and dedication to implementing equitable solutions within Metro's parks and nature areas.
- Live, work, play, pray in neighborhoods experiencing disinvestment, (insert clause from target community).

What principles should be established when considering how voters should demonstrate their eligibility? (e.g. how they should prove they're allowed to participate?)

- Provide their lived stories connected to the place
- Addresses/major intersection, name of businesses, name of worship, name of a place one plays/recreation
- Relationship building, conversations as participants show up
- Personal connection to place (residency, school ID, connection to someone with official identification (like parent with child registered at local school, etc.)
- Communications with a community liaison
- Open to everyone
- Personal identification or letter with mailing address

Amanda reminded the group that there was no requirement in PB principles that says identification is a requirement. She explained the potential benefits and negatives of less rigorous credentialing.

The interactive polls had technical issues, so she decided to facilitate a group discussion about the baseline recommendations for how voters should demonstrate eligibility.

- **Comment:** I think relationship building and conversations should be moved down because they would be too difficult to track. There are a lot of people in the Metro boundary, so how do we validate who is eligible?
  - o **Amanda commented:** In the process I mentioned earlier, the goal was to develop people's sense of place and roots, so they asked people to tell stories while they were face painting them. I thought it was one a sweet way to bring out community and there are ways to weave in those values as people gather together.

A member asked if this was for determining whether someone falls into eligibility and asked if a community agreement could be implemented.

- **A:** Yes, these are the process rules for how they prove eligibility. NY implemented community ID's and allowed people to sign an agreement saying they won't vote more than once. For them, access was an important value.

Allison asked if any committee members were worried about people who might have more access "gaming" the system.

Members generally weren't concerned and also liked the idea of a community agreement. One member mentioned concern about certain groups on social media putting out a call for action and flooding the survey to skew the result.
- **Comment:** There are people who want to be disruptive, but I also wonder if we can add a statement that says we are voting by community agreements, but if something doesn't seem right, we reserve the right to ask for further documentation of proof of eligibility.
- **Comment:** Providing stories is a huge component and creates more trust and safety, so having that ability builds connection. Can we provide a hybrid approach, or combine the first and second point to help us know folks are rooted in a sense of place as well?

Allison mentioned that some of these could function beautifully in person but less online (when thinking about the "call to action" piece). She asked if there could be a difference based on tools being used, and Amanda said it was possible to have people log in and register when doing things online. Considering all of the variables is important, as some people have the capacity to campaign for their projects and have many people turn out, which can influence results.

What principles should be used to determine participant's age?

- No age limit
- Review typical age turn out patterns from other spaces like voting, civic engagement in local government, etc. and prioritize age groups who don't typically take part
- Open to all ages, but those under 18 will require a sponsor/guardian approval
- Maybe not open up for voting, but provide a space to gather stories and experiences for those unable to participate due to age
- Incentives for participation?
- As young as 12 years old
- Age 6 and above
- Age 18 and above

Amanda pointed out that articulating a younger age may open participation to younger people who may assume that they aren't eligible. Picking an age would give it a stronger youth focus. She asked what the group's thoughts were on setting an age limit.

- **Comment:** There is also the issue of parents or someone else using someone's name in an online system. Is there a way to limit to in-person events? I like the idea of allowing no limits for some parts but still need to think about it.
  - **Comment:** There may be legal requirements for who can open an account or not, and we can have some conversations surrounding that.
- **Comment:** I saw another group reduced the age over time as the program went on.

- **Comment:** How are we making it accessible for the young person to know what they are voting for? I like the idea of engaging youth as young as 12, so should we have people vote as family units, while recognizing that not everyone has a "family unit"? It's hard to know without knowing what communities we are centering. A 40-year-old Latina woman is probably going to be less likely to participate than a 40-year-old white woman who has had years of access to this process. So, I'm struggling with limiting but we need to be strategic in how we target the communities we want to participate.

Amanda asked if the group was feeling a specific number related to the question, and several members liked the age range of 6 and up.

Allison stated that she felt as though the group wanted to engage younger children, while taking into consideration what materials would be appropriate to do so. She asked if this was the consensus. Some members felt that engaging children at a young age has many benefits, but children can be influenced by adults. Members should also think about limitations and capacity of age groups to make materials as accessible as possible. This would also make materials accessible for a wide range of people.

Amanda said that it sounded like the group was settling around the age of 6 and expressed that there could be a differentiation between idea collection conversations and voting. Staff would write up the ideas and make sure engagement would support developmental levels.

Project Development

Amanda Hudson, PBO, gave an overview of the Project Development phase. She asked committee members to watch a short video that explained how PB proposal development and research goes from idea to implementation. Crista Gardner, Metro, asked the group to keep in mind that this was one of many ways to do the work. While the budget delegate was the most common model, other groups have held project development meetings which allowed the community to engage while staff was responsible for developing the proposals.

The group took a 5-minute break.

Project Development continued

Amanda shared several project proposal examples and asked the members to review them. She discussed an example which did not have staff to develop the project and explained some choices to help mitigate issues that may happen as a result, such as implementing nonprofits. Another project example chose several project implementers to equally split funds for the project. This would occur before idea collection to allow for a more equitable process.

Crista overviewed a presentation focusing on developing proposals for the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants projects. The project is in the design processes phase and is working on developing a guidebook that will shape the way the program runs idea collections, proposal phases, and community votes.

Project development workflow:
- Project ideas: come in through idea collection phase

- Project development: vetting; identifying partners; feasibility; cost analysis; process and procurement
- Community Vote Ballot

Crista reminded the group that Capital Grants can only fund capital projects.
- Projects must show partnerships between community-based organizations and public (non-federal) agencies
- They are owned by a public entity and capitalized by a non-federal public entity
- Expenses must be a capital expense
  - Land acquisition, design, planning and construction
  - Administrative costs
  - Capital costs
  - Direct project costs

Bond funding is regulated by the Oregon Constitution. The Oregon Constitution and the 2019 Bond does not allow Bond funding to be spent on project development. Metro staff are exploring other funding options and how the funding might affect the project development process.

The grant committee will:
- Review application materials and processes to reduce barriers for communities of color and other historically marginalized communities to apply with strong proposals.
- Evaluate applications for funding to determine where they meet the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program criteria and whether the applicants and their partners have the capacity to implement their project as described.
- Offer suggestions to strengthen applications.

Community Vote

Crista overviewed the community voting process so that members could have a more in-depth discussion about it at the next meeting.

Roles in community voting:
- Community
  - Votes on developed project proposals
- Committee
  - Recommends funding for projects selected in community vote
- Metro Council
  - Makes grant awards

Engagement and Participation
- How to maximize, especially for target communities?
- Who is eligible?
- How is eligibility determined or verified?
- Distributing voting among community locations and resources?

Community vote structure
- Where does voting happen?
- What kind of events? How many?
- Single pot of projects or multiple categories?

- Ranked choice, single vote, or multiple equal votes?
- Balancing online and in-person

When balancing in-person and online voting, equity, transparency, accessibility, community, legitimacy, and integration are important considerations.

Crista shared contact information for Humberto and herself and then opened the meeting for discussion.
- **Comment:** Is there space for the community to provide feedback and perspective as this develops and progresses to the committee vote and the Metro Council?
  - **A:** That is up to the committee, as far as what would be considered. The legal requirement is that the committee is recommending to Metro Council.

Another member asked Crista to restate the makeup of the Grant Committee, which are the committee members. The budget delegates occur through the project development phase.

- **Q:** When will the funds for the project development phase be figured out?
  - **A:** Before we implement the project in Fall 2022.
- **Q:** How did PB get selected if bond language says project development can't be funded? Was this out of order?
  - **A:** If the project was guaranteed to result in a capital asset, then the bond would allow us to pay for some portion of the development of that project. PB was chosen because of the Parks and Nature Bond criteria of community engagement and racial equity.
  - **A:** The bond money can't be used in project development because there's a vote.
- **Q:** What other sources are being considered and how will they be allocated equitably?
  - **A:** We are looking at alternative funding, but I can't speak on it. We do have assurance from finance that we will be able to find money for the project development. For this project, we have to be careful about how private funds are being used.

Allison asked if there were other ways of knowing and understanding the process that would help committee members work through the information.
- **Q:** We talked about not knowing the geography of the project. It would be helpful to know this information. When will this information be decided?
  - **A:** We have asked leadership to help make this decision. We are hoping that the development of the guidebook can be applied to anywhere in the Metro region, with variations in size and scope.

Allison mentioned that this might be a bigger discussion that should be continued at the next meeting.

Next Steps and Closing

Allison and Crista closed the meeting with the following items:
- Committee members are invited to share their thoughts on meeting process improvements and topics they'd like to discuss using a Google Jamboard. This will be open for committee members to fill out until the next meeting.
- The next meeting is scheduled for March 15.

Allison thanked everyone for their time and the meeting ended.

Appendix A: Zoom Meeting Chat

Ariella Frishberg: Think about an experience you've had where you were tasked with convening a group for the purpose of working on a project together. What made it successful and what made it challenging?
Jeffrey Lee: Past Metro projects included this language: targeted nature-deficient areas, affordable housing, and low-income communities
Jeffrey Lee: ** and/or
Crista Gardner: "Neighborhoods are at risk of further gentrification"
Jeffrey Lee: https://belonging.berkeley.edu/implementing-targeted-universalism
Gabrielle: Could you clarify what 'participate' refers to? Is this voting? Submission?
Amanda Hudson: pollev.com/pboregon240
Crista Gardner: On the geography question, Metro Parks and Nature leadership made a policy decision that Capital Grants Pilot Program Design and Review Committee members should reside in the Metro UGB.
Ariella Frishberg: Weds March 2 - 4:30-6:30
               Tue March 15 - 4:30-6:30
Brandon Goldner: Ya'll are amazing. Thank you all so much for your time and energy!!

Appendix B: Land acknowledgement – Oversight Committee

The greater Portland area is built upon the ancestral homelands, villages and traditional use areas of multiple Indigenous tribes and bands who have stewarded these lands we cherish since time immemorial.

The lands at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers have long served as a major crossroads for the economic, social and political interactions of tribal nations for thousands of years and a place of significance in the homelands and traditional territories of many tribal nations.

We owe a special acknowledgement to the many tribes and bands and their descendants who ceded these lands in treaties with the United States.

We recognize the strong and diverse tribal nations and Native communities in our region today and offer respect and gratitude for their stewardship of these lands past, present and future.
Metro seeks to establish meaningful relationships and explore opportunities to collaborate and consider tribal priorities and interests in our work, including our parks and nature bond work.
We are building our understanding of tribal interests in the greater Portland area as we implement our parks and nature work.

As we learn more, we hope to refine Metro's approach to land acknowledgements in the future;
We recognize land acknowledgements are important and can be sensitive. We are hoping to learn more to integrate this into our work appropriately and in a good way honoring tribal interests going forward.