

Memo



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Date: January 3, 2022
To: Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Pilot – Program Design and Review Committee
From: Capital Grants Pilot team
Subject: 2019 Parks and Nature Bond: Roles and Responsibilities

Purpose

The Program Design and Review Committee represents the communityⁱ. The purpose of this memo is to inform you of the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond outlined roles and responsibilities of the Program Design and Review Committee, Metro staff, and Metro Council to which the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Pilot must legally adhere.

Background

Funded through the [2019 bond measure](#), the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Pilot participatory approach will enable community members to have a direct voice in choosing which projects to recommend for funding in their communities called [participatory budgeting](#). Members of the committee will help to design the program from community vision to implementation and evaluation, and recommend up to \$4M in funding to community organizations and groups for capital projects. These programs will support community-led projects that benefit historically marginalized communities, protect and improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, support climate resiliency and/or increase people's experience of nature at the community scale.ⁱⁱ Chosen projects will emphasize community engagement, racial equity and climate resilience and meet the requirements of the 2019 Parks and Natural Areas bond measure for capital grants.ⁱⁱⁱ

Summary of roles^{iv}

Metro is recruited 7-11 community members that reflect the racial, ethnic and economic diversity of the region to help design the Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Pilot. In order to ensure that this committee is representative of the communities that Metro serves, Metro invited community members that reflect the broad diversity of experience and background in the region to apply.

Metro looked for individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds including those with academic, professional and lived experience on best practices related to water quality, habitat restoration and traditional ecological knowledge to create the greatest benefits for people, plants and wildlife.^v This includes expertise in water quality and habitat restoration; landscape architecture; real estate; community development; workforce development, job training and apprenticeship programs; climate adaptation and resilience policies and practices; sustainable development techniques, such as green infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and carbon sequestration;^{vi} and those who can represent the interests of tribal communities.^{vii} Committee members will be committed to Metro's parks and nature mission and to supporting opportunities for communities of color and other historically marginalized communities to design and build access to nature for their communities.

^{viii}

Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Program Design

Working within the bond framework, members of the committee will establish a shared vision for the program and design and the ground rules and values that will guide the program from start to finish. From there, they will design the process by which projects are identified and evaluated.

Working with Metro staff, they will also help:

- Identify and implement innovative methods, through project development and capacity building, to support communities of color and other historically marginalized communities to prepare and submit applications (funding proposals).
- Create selection criteria and program materials that respond to community feedback and ensure compliance with the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program objectives and three bond criteria: racial equity, community engagement and climate resilience.^{ix}
- Review application materials and processes to reduce barriers for communities of color and other historically marginalized communities to apply with strong proposals.
- Adopt a methodology to evaluate, track and report on the program's effectiveness.^x

Grant Review

In addition to designing the process, committee members will help evaluate, review and decide, in conjunction with a community vote, which projects to recommend to Metro Council for funding. In this capacity, the committee will work with Metro staff to:

- Evaluate applications (funding proposals) for funding to determine whether they meet the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program criteria, bond criteria and whether the applicants and their partners have the capacity to implement their project as described and fiscal accountability.
- Offer suggestions to strengthen applications (funding proposals).
- Make funding recommendations to the Metro Council.^{xi}
- Review committee members may still propose funding ideas, but reviewers must disclose any conflicts of interest.
- The Metro Council makes all final funding decisions.

Established roles and responsibilities

The 2019 Parks and Nature Bond outlined roles and responsibilities of the Program Design and Review Committee, Metro staff, and Metro Council to which the Capital Grants Pilot must legally adhere. Those are listed below.

What is the role of the committee? ^{xii}

Any group of individuals making recommendations on behalf of the Capital Grants Pilot is considered the committee. It doesn't matter if it is called the review committee, task force, steering committee or any other group.

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 whether 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 and fiscal accountability.

- Offer suggestions to strengthen applications.
- Adopt a methodology to evaluate, track and report on the program's effectiveness.
- *Since Exhibit D says these actions will be done by the review committee staffed by Metro and composed of community members, legal staff does not recommend splitting the functions between two different committees like a steering committee and review committee for the Capital Grants Pilot.*

Grant committee members may be provided a stipend for time and expertise provided to the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grant program. *Guidance around stipends for the Oversight Committee and other PN bond committees could be used to determine the stipends available.*

A committee, staffed by Metro, will be established to:

1) Review all projects and make funding recommendations to the Metro Council. *Metro legal staff recommends a similar process for the committee to the past Capital Grants review committee process: the review committee meets to decide on grant award recommendations; staff writes a memo to Metro Council; staff writes a resolution and staff report that identify the committee members and their recommendation to Metro Council; and Metro Council awards the grants. For example, the committee would evaluate to recommend which proposals to bring to the community vote and then recommend the grant awards based on the outcomes of the community vote to the Metro Council.*

2) Evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Metro staff will consult with experts from a wide variety of backgrounds including those with academic, professional and lived experience on best practices related to water quality, habitat restoration, and traditional ecological knowledge in order to offer technical assistance to ... the committee on creating the greatest benefits for people, plants and wildlife. If the committee is composed of members with or provided with trainings in these areas of expertise, that would satisfy this requirement.

What are the requirements for the committee members? ^{xiii}

The committee will be comprised of no fewer than seven and no more than 11 community members and will reflect the racial, ethnic and economic diversity of the region.

Committee members will be committed to Metro's parks and nature mission and to supporting opportunities for communities of color and other historically marginalized communities to design and build access to nature for their communities.

Expertise will be sought in the following fields:

- Water quality and habitat restoration
- Landscape architecture
- Real estate
- Community development
- Workforce development, job training and apprenticeship programs
- Climate adaptation and resilience policies and practices
- Sustainable development techniques, such as green infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and carbon sequestration.

Metro tribal relations specialist has also requested an individual who can represent the

interests of the tribal communities.

A review committee, staffed by Metro, will be established to review all projects and make funding recommendations to the Metro Council. *The committee must make the funding recommendation to the Metro Council; however, we are confident that a structure can be implemented which aligns with the goals of the participatory budgeting process and adheres to the bond legislation as well. For example, after the community vote has occurred, the review committee could recommend the grant awards based on the outcomes of the community vote.*

What is the role and responsibility of Metro staff? ^{xiv}

Metro staff will:

- Identify and implement innovative methods, through project development and capacity building, to support communities of color and other historically marginalized communities to prepare and submit applications.
- Create selection criteria and program materials that respond to community feedback and ensure compliance with the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program objectives. *If the handbook sets forth the selection criteria and program materials, then Metro staff is ultimately responsible for this work. Metro staff must obtain community feedback outside of the committee.*

What technical assistance will Metro offer to grant applicants?

Metro staff will:

- Consult with experts from a wide variety of backgrounds including those with academic, professional and lived experience on best practices related to water quality, habitat restoration, and traditional ecological knowledge in order to offer technical assistance to applicants ... on creating the greatest benefits for people, plants and wildlife. *If the committee is composed of members with this area of expertise or provides trainings in these areas of expertise, that would satisfy this requirement.*
- Provide trainings, resources and technical assistance to support applicants with lower capacity and applicants from communities of color through project development and capacity-building.
- Provide assistance to grantees in resolving unexpected situations during project development, permitting, contracting and construction that could influence the project's success.

What is the role of Metro Council?

Office of Metro Attorney (OMA) has opined that Metro Council can not cede authority of making the final grant award; however, we are confident that a structure can be implemented which aligns with the goals of the participatory budgeting process and adheres to the bond legislation as well. For example, after the community vote has occurred, Metro Council could validate or approve the results of the vote and make the grant award based on that outcome.

The Metro Council will make all grant awards.^{xv}

Case Studies

In 2021, Metro staff began research to strategically design the work plan for the \$4M pilot of the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants pilot. Metro staff reviewed literature, joined a UK based community of practice, conducted over 20 informational interviews of and attended workshops by over 30 foundations and experts around the world. The following are a few of the case studies discovered during that process.

City of Portland Clean Energy Fund^{xvi}

The Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) allocates approximately \$44 - \$61 million dollars for green jobs, healthy homes and other climate resilience-increasing projects through a community-driven process that centers environmental justice. Their nine-member Grant Committee reflects the racial, ethnic and economic diversity of Portland and guided the development of the program's pre-grant handbook, which articulated the guiding principles that ensure that project funds are allocated to meet the program's vision and values, all of which center climate justice for vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Some of the lessons we have learned from this Grant Committee include those relevant to the Capital Grants Pilot Program Design and Review Committee, including:

- Necessity of complete & accessible records
 - File management/consistency of naming
 - Complete minutes/transcripts
 - All documents organized in a single place in a coherent manner
- Importance of discussing typical processes and where this will depart
- Provide precedents for various documents to facilitate creation
 - Bylaws
 - Applications/handbook
 - RFPs
 - Vision/guidance/objectives
- Case studies make topics more engaging and accessible, especially to committee members with limited prior experience

Women's Foundation of Oregon, NW Social Justice Fund^{xvii}

Both of these organizations use the model designed by The Giving Project, which focuses on raising resources from new sources and distributing those resources through a more participatory process. This model also engages participants in transformative leadership development in addition to including them in grantmaking decisions. Their social justice framework has resulted in more inclusive grantmaking and new fundraising opportunities, and has given participants the skills and opportunities to join grantmaking boards, launch successful independent fundraising campaigns and lead grassroots social justice initiatives.

Some of the lessons we have learned from these committees include those relevant to the Capital Grants Pilot Program Design and Review Committee, including the importance of:

- Fertile ground with collective purpose, political philosophy and civic engagement
- Cultural change from leadership and hard work to shift in bureaucracy
- Definition of parameters for recommendations and decision-making
- Outreach methods for representation of the community
- Facilitation is critical to develop a mindset of participation
- Ground rules for building something in a equitable way with the institution
- Deep learning, community building and trust
- Partnership for a common end
- Mutual understanding of one another's language and time

ⁱ PBO graphic

- ⁱⁱ Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{iv} Program Design and Review Committee Application, October 2021.
- ^v Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{vi} Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{vii} Katie MacDonald Request.
- ^{viii} Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{ix} Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^x Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{xi} Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{xii} Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{xiii} Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{xiv} Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{xv} Resolution No. 19-4988, Exhibit D.
- ^{xvi} Stakeholder Interviews, Spring 2021.
- ^{xvii} Stakeholder Interviews, Spring 2021.

The Capital Grants Pilot Program Design and Review Committee



Metro



\$475 million to
improve water quality,
protect fish and
wildlife and connect
people to nature

1. Local parks projects
2. Community grants
3. Large scale community
visions
4. Metro park improvements
5. Land acquisition and
restoration
6. Trails

oregonmetro.gov/ParksAndNatureBond



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Bond criteria set this measure apart

- Advance racial equity
- Base decisions on meaningful engagement
- Prepare for climate change



Land acquisition

Would privately owned property in your community make the next great neighborhood natural area?

Urban transformations

Can a redevelopment project in your community go the extra step to integrate nature and habitat if more funding is available?

Restoration

Is there a degraded stream, wetland or other habitat that needs to be restored in your neighborhood?

Neighborhood livability

Can schools, parks or other public land in your neighborhood become a place for people to experience and enjoy nature?



Metro



What is participatory budgeting?

Participatory Budgeting is a democratic process in which community members decide how to spend part of a public budget.



Committee

In order to ensure that this committee is representative of the communities that Metro serves, Metro invited community members to apply that:

- reflect the broad diversity of experience and background in the region
- Love parks and natural areas
- Want to support conservation and racial equity



Committee Roles and Responsibilities: Program Design

Establish a shared vision for the program

Design the ground rules and values that will guide the program from start to finish.

Design the process by which projects are identified and evaluated.



Committee Roles and Responsibilities: Grant Review

- Evaluate applications (funding proposals)
- Offer suggestions to strengthen applications
- Make funding recommendations based on community vote to the Metro Council



Applied learning

Capital Grants Pilot committee

Fertile ground

Leadership

Parameters

Outreach

Facilitation

Ground rules

Learning cohort

Partnership



Meetings and stipends

Up to 18 meetings in 2022

January to March 2022

- Two times per month
- Tuesday evenings at 4:30 p.m.
- Committee may change dates or times

Stipend of \$200 per meeting attended



Key contacts



Metro

Community engagement: Humberto Marquez Mendez,
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Capital grants: Crista Gardner,
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Overall bond and levy: Beth Cohen,
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Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Pilot Team

Metro

PBO

Beth Cohen

Amanda Hudson

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Jim Labbe

Brandon Goldner

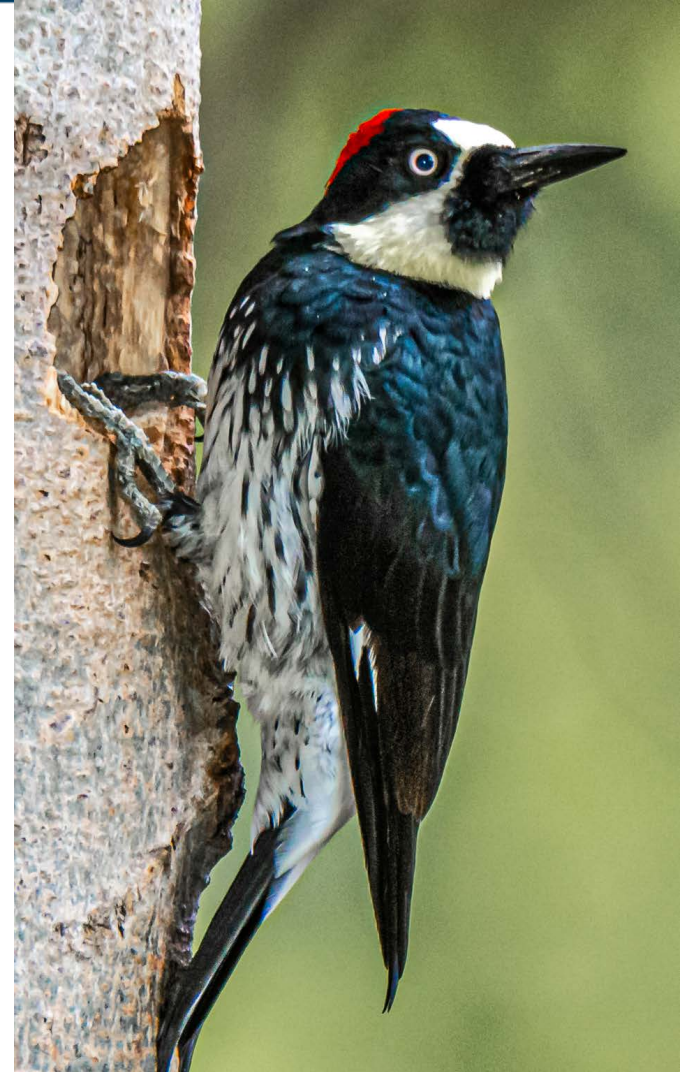
Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu

Humberto Marquez Mendez

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Mychal Tetteh

Allison Brown (JLA)



Questions?



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Community Agreements



- We're not expecting perfection: invitation to speak in draft
- Intent vs. Impact: Intention is important, but we attend to impact first
- WAIT: why am I talking/why aren't I talking
 - Step up, step up
- We are all learners and teachers
- Professional expertise isn't privileged over lived experience and wisdom
- Expect nonclosure: this work is going to continue and live on, and not every meeting will end with a resolution
- Committee members and staff commit to being as transparent as possible, including on our limitations

Group Decision Making



Modified Consensus:

- Aiming for outcomes that everyone can agree on (even if it's not your favorite)
- Putting time limits on discussion, to encourage more succinct comments
- Creating a threshold for a recommendation: if we don't reach consensus, a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of the group (5 members) voting in favor constitutes a recommendation
- Facilitator uses tools (Fist to 5, or surveys outside of meetings) to gauge levels of agreement and help move discussion forward