

## **2006 Bond Measure Blue Ribbon Committee**

### **Recommendations & Considerations December 3, 2005**

#### **Background**

Over the past ten years, several planning efforts and other collective actions have been undertaken to develop a vision for our region that defines how it should grow and what qualities should be protected. Responsible development that builds strong local communities, the protection of ecologically significant lands and providing people with the experiences of nature that they value so highly are central tenets in all of them.

In 1995 citizens strongly approved Metro's \$135 million Open Spaces, Parks and Streams bond measure to protect the landscapes that help define our region. Since then more than 8,100 acres of river, stream and interconnected wildlife and trail corridors, buttes, wetlands and prairies have been protected.

In 2000 – 2001, the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC), a task force composed of elected officials from throughout the region, stated the need to protect and improve the ecological health of fish and wildlife habitat in the region and urged the Metro Council to extend its land acquisition efforts beyond the scope of the successful 1995 bond measure.

In December 2004, the Council adopted resolution No. 04-3506A, which resolved to take before the voters an acquisition and restoration program bond measure by November 2006. In accordance with this resolution, the Council established the Blue Ribbon Committee in September 2005 (Resolution No. 05-3612). The committee, a short-term task force, was to advise and make preliminary recommendations to the Council on the content of such a bond measure program.

#### **Committee Process and Charge**

The Committee, composed of 18 business, civic and citizen representatives recruited by Council President Bragdon, met for three sessions - October 25, November 2 and November 9, 2005 - and was asked by the Council to provide advice on the following questions:

1. What should the overall size of the bond be, within a range of \$140 to \$270 million?
2. Which regional-scale target areas should be prioritized for future acquisition by Metro?
3. What type, if any, of regional capital projects should be included – for example, open some previously acquired open spaces for public use, complete regional trails, build a few high profile capital improvements (e.g. trailhead facilities for Forest Park)

4. How much of the bond should be dedicated to the “local share per capita” component, as implemented under the 1995 measure?
5. Should the “local share” fund be limited to acquisitions and capital projects related to natural areas as in the 1995 bond, or be open to any parks or public space projects at the discretion of the local jurisdictions, including soccer fields, tennis courts, urban plazas, etc.?
6. Should the bond also contain a more flexible, opportunity-driven fund, such as the proposed competitive “Nature in Neighborhoods” capital grant program? If the committee favors this approach, what should be its primary focus and how large should it be?

In March 2006, Council will decide on a final bond sum and program after it considers and reviews the Blue Ribbon Committee’s recommendations, recommendations from Metro’s Greenspaces Policy Advisory Committee (GPAC) and seeks input from local jurisdictions and the community at large.

## **Recommendations & Considerations**

**1. Size of a 2006 Bond Measure.** Protection of water quality and fish and wildlife habitat is essential in order to protect our quality of life, manage regional growth and leave a legacy for future generations. The Committee recommends a 2006 natural areas acquisition bond measure of a maximum of \$220 million in order to, as one member stated, “maintain a keen eye on what’s doable, sustainable and what protects our natural and cultural heritage.” It is critical to balance an investment in water quality and natural resource protection with strong voter support. The Committee believes that \$220 million is the “break point” between what will be gained from such an investment and where public support may fall off in the face of competing measures. A majority of the committee felt that going higher than \$220 would jeopardize support for the measure. \$220 million also translates into a \$32 per year contribution by the average homeowner, or \$2.67, approximately, per month for the protection of water quality, natural areas and fish and wildlife habitat – a sum consistent with preferences reflected in recent polling.

The Committee was asked by the Metro Council to consider a range of between \$140 million and \$270 million based on the size of the 1995 bond and indications of an acceptable ceiling provided from recent polling. In-depth discussions about the success of the last bond measure (\$135.6 million) weighed against lessening voter tax tolerance and the urgency of and opportunity for protecting remaining headwaters and areas critical to fish and wildlife habitat led the Committee to conclude that a balance must be achieved between these competing concerns in order for the measure to be enthusiastically embraced by voters. The Committee understands and strongly supports the need to continue investing in the region’s landscape in order to protect essential values but the investment must be made at a level palatable to citizens. \$220 million will provide a substantial local component and provide Metro with \$165 million to acquire ecologically significant lands and develop public access to previously acquired natural areas.

**2. Protection of ecologically significant lands.** The Blue Ribbon Committee recommends acquisition of lands in ecologically significant headwaters, rivers and

stream corridors, forests and other critical habitat areas throughout all parts of the region in order to protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat for the long term. The Committee also strongly supports the methodology of specific, justified target areas being clearly identified in advance on scientific grounds, and in pursuing only those acquisitions which are consistent with those standards.

The Committee recommends eleven new target areas (acquisition goal: 4,200 acres, approximately), six regional greenways, and continued acquisition (850 acres, approximately) of critical lands in specific target areas remaining from the 1995 bond measure. The recommendation is based on the assessment of over 40 public and private scientists from throughout the region who identified these areas as essential to the continued protection of water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. The protection of these proposed new target areas, when taken together with the lands acquired under Metro's 1995 bond measure, will help protect a vital ecological landscape for current and future generations, maintaining the values that make this region a desirable place to live, raise a family and do business.

The eleven Proposed Target Areas include (see attached map and target area descriptions on back):

Damascus Butte	Chehalem Ridge
Deep Creek and Tributaries	Wapato Lake
Clackamas River Bluffs	Rock Creek Watershed
Abernethy Creek	Columbia Slough
Stafford/Wilson Creek	Johnson Creek Watershed
Lower Tualatin Headwaters	

The six proposed regional greenways include:

Tonquin Trail	Westside Powerline Trail
Willamette River Greenway	Cazadero Trail
Fanno Creek Greenway	Gresham-Fairview Trail

Remaining 1995 Target Areas include:

East Buttes and Boring Lava Domes	Tonquin Geologic Area
Clear Creek Canyon	Cooper Mountain
Clackamas River Greenway	Gales Creek
Newell Creek Canyon	Jackson Bottoms/Dairy-McKay Creeks
Tryon Creek Linkages	Forest Park
Willamette Narrows	Springwater Trail Corridor
Canemah Bluff	Rock Creek
Sandy River Gorge	

The Committee recommends the removal of Hayden Island as a proposed target area because of its land use designation (industrial) and the owner's documented unwillingness to sell, but encourages continued exploration of potential opportunities in the existing East Buttes Target Area, given its location in the region relative to

population growth. Metro staff will continue analyzing opportunities in each target area in order to produce “an ecologically meaningful portfolio.”

**3. ‘Peopling Nature’ Projects.** The Committee recommends that no more than a few (approximately six) highly visible capital improvement projects on public land, regardless of jurisdiction, be included to improve peoples’ access to previously acquired public sites and to help protect and improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.

Some capital projects, only if they clearly reflect the ecological intent of the measure and provide opportunities for citizens to use and appreciate previously acquired natural areas, will increase park provider and citizen support without eroding support overall. Completion of important land and water trail corridors, new trailheads and other projects that help citizens be in and enjoy natural areas should receive consideration. Metro staff will continue to develop a compatible package in close coordination with local park providers that own key elements of the current regional system (e.g., Forest Park). Current potential projects include \$16.5 million, approximately, of total bond funds. We believe this level of involvement is advisable, but to go further would undermine the purpose by inappropriately diluting the land acquisition and water quality protection focus of the bond.

**4. Local Legacy Program.** Local government and community involvement in the implementation of the bond measure provides an opportunity for communities to contribute to the protection of water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and the presence of nature in neighborhoods throughout the region. Such efforts will reinforce the regional vision by integrating natural areas, wildlife and trail corridors, and nature-related parks and parklands into local areas.

The Committee recommends that twenty-five percent (25%) of the total bond be provided for local projects. Twenty percent (20%) should be allocated as a per capita share to be used by local jurisdictions and park providers. Five percent (5%) should be allocated to a capital fund made available to a variety of community groups, on a competitive basis, for projects that produce the same results – improve water quality, protect or enhance fish and wildlife habitat and return nature to deficient neighborhoods throughout the urban and exurban parts of the region.

**5. Local Legacy Criteria.** Local projects should directly complement the larger regional vision by focusing on the protection of water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, and the restoration of areas important to our quality of life. The Committee embraces and recommends use of the attached local share project selection criteria but encourages some flexibility to accommodate communities with multiple park needs. However, the Committee reiterates that projects should connect directly to or complement the ecological intent of the bond measure, and cautions against deviating from that intent. Hence, land acquisition for future neighborhood parks may be eligible, but construction of active recreation facilities should not be considered eligible (see attached criteria).

**6. Community Water and Restoration (Opportunity) Grant Program.** A new capital fund would provide an additional opportunity for more people to engage in local efforts that reinforce the regional vision. The restoration of natural areas, wetlands and stream corridors, construction of rain gardens, and the replanting of streets are a few examples of the types of projects that can re-nature neighborhoods and build strong

constituencies that will help protect natural processes at all scales. The Committee embraces and recommends the attached project selection criteria. The Committee discussed and reached unanimous agreement that these funds should not be used to develop facilities such as farmers markets, interpretive centers, or other heavily developed public spaces. (see attached criteria).

## **Meeting Summaries**

The following brief summaries present the interim issues and direction set by the Committee in each of its three meetings.

### **October 25, 2005**

Council President Bragdon reiterated the Committee's charge and the need for the Committee's scrutiny in recommending elements of the 2006 bond measure. Regional Parks Department staff presented background on the composition and success of the 1995 Open Spaces, Parks and Streams bond measure and articulated the current need for continued acquisition of critical lands to protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat for the future. Staff described the 2006 bond measure as contemplated to date and provided a computer flyover of proposed regional target areas selected through a survey of scientists and biologists, a local share per capita component and a new opportunity grant program designed to include and engage a wide range of local partners. Patricia McCaig presented poll results from a recent survey of 600 residents that indicates strong interest across all populations in a regional measure focused on the protection of water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. Mike Ragsdale, chair of Metro's Greenspaces Policy Advisory Committee (GPAC), presented that committee's recommendations concerning the bond measure.

#### Issues Identified for Discussion:

- Competition from other bond measures (i.e., schools, jails)
- Inclusion of active recreation projects as part of the measure
- Operation and maintenance revenue needs for current and future land management

Direction: Chair Miller asked that Parks staff provide millage rates, population by county, and generate three acquisition and cost estimate scenarios - \$140 million, \$195 million and \$270 million - including acreages for new target areas, acreages for land still to be acquired in the 1995 bond target areas, regional greenway acquisitions and regional capital improvement projects. All three scenarios would assume a local component of 25% of the total sum for discussion purposes.

### **November 2, 2005**

Committee members discussed the three acquisition scenarios and the proposed target areas, and concluded the meeting with a brief discussion of the local share and opportunity fund. The acquisition of the total acreages outlined in all target areas is estimated to cost \$800 million. Parks staff stated that given the program's willing seller approach, \$270 million is the sum required to sustain all these areas to protect water quality and the current biological functions identified by the science community. Staff described the target areas using biologic and landscape ecology principles and their compatibility with Metro's regional growth management goals. A \$140 million scenario would provide little ability to acquire acreages that would contribute significantly to

sustaining future water quality or fish and wildlife habitat unless several proposed target areas were dropped, particularly those located within the current Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Chair Miller emphasized the need to reach agreement on the total program in the third meeting on November 9.

Issues Identified for Discussion:

- Inconsistency of 'signature' projects with intent of the measure based on recent polling and Council's Nature in Neighborhood directive.
- Need for flexibility in local share to maintain support for the measure.
- Focus of opportunity grant fund - need for clear criteria and types of projects.
- Relationship of target areas to vision for region (Metro's 2040 Framework Plan). Need for target areas to be defined in the context of the Regional Framework Plan and current growth management efforts.
- Need for target areas and local share to include growing cities and new areas in order to maintain residents' enthusiasm for the measure.

Direction: Committee members decided to recommend funding the local component of the measure at 20% per capita and 5% opportunity grant fund. The majority rejected the concern of some members about 'signature' projects and decided to retain them to improve public access to nature and to strengthen local support for the measure. They also requested cost estimates for each project. Committee members rejected the \$140 million bond total as too low for success in maintaining regional water quality and fish and wildlife habitat. Chair Miller directed staff to generate a \$200 million package and to prioritize proposed target areas using four overarching criteria: water quality, ecological significance, public usability and compatibility with regional growth goals. Committee members requested that Hayden Island be identified for deletion due to its inclusion as industrial land in Metro's 2040 Regional Framework Plan. Members also requested that the opportunity grant fund and local share criteria be made more explicit. Finally, members requested a list of potential ballot measures slated for November 2006.

**November 9, 2005**

Chair Miller asked the group to reach as much agreement as possible on the bond total, proposed target areas and criteria of the local funding programs, and to make clear additional considerations for Council on issues not fully resolved. GPAC Chair Mike Ragsdale reiterated GPAC's recommendation of a \$270 million bond measure. Members agreed to decide the largest prudent number for the measure in the context of tax weariness, competition with other measures and the need to balance the right target areas with the right locations. Members negotiated a total number after weighing the risk of a higher measure losing with the overall broad regional ecological landscape vision being diluted further in a lower measure by public process or a Council decision. The Committee reiterated the need for the measure to remain consistent with water quality and fish and wildlife habitat protection goals.

Issues Identified for Discussion:

- Addition of Scouter Mountain (East Buttes Target Area) as a proposed target area
- Opportunity grant fund needs tighter focus – needs to reflect poll results and keep 're-naturing' and water quality focus

- Retention of regional capital improvement projects vs. trimming; addition of other capital improvement projects (e.g. Willamette River railroad bridge from Milwaukie to Lake Oswego)

Direction. The Committee agreed on a \$220 million bond that includes \$16 million, approximately, for regional capital improvement projects. The local component was set at 25%. Committee members urged Metro to make every effort to acquire land in the 1995 East Buttes Target Area, if financially feasible. Members approved the local share and opportunity grant fund criteria and recommended that community gardens be included under project eligibility criteria.

### **Blue Ribbon Committee Members**

Fred Miller, Chair

Fred Bruning, President, CenterCal Properties

Richard Cantlin, Partner, Perkins Coie LLP

Debbie Craig, Trustee, Meyer Memorial Trust

Carol Dillin, Vice President for Government Affairs and Public Policy, PGE

Ashleigh Flynn, Director, Cascadia Behavioral Health Care

John Griffiths, Business Development Manager, Intel

Mike Houck, Director, Urban Greenspaces Institute

Charles Jordan, Board member, The Conservation Fund

Lynn Lehrbach, Representative for Joint Council #37, Teamsters Union

Lori Luchake, President, Miles Fiberglass

Patricia McCaig, McCaig Communications and Opinion Research, Inc.

Randy Miller, President, The Moore Co., and chairman, Portland Ambassadors

Don Morissette, President, Don Morissette Homes

Larry Sitz, CEO, Emerick Construction

Hans Van de Meer, President and CEO, The Parati Company

Sara Vickerman, Senior Director of Biodiversity, Defenders of Wildlife

Dilafroz Williams, Professor of education policy, PSU; Portland School Board