

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL HABITAT
PROTECTION, RESTORATION AND
GREENSPACES INITIATIVE CALLED
NATURE IN NEIGHBORHOODS

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RESOLUTION NO. 05-3574A

Introduced by Metro President David Bragdon
and Metro Councilor Carl Hosticka

WHEREAS, Oregonians have a long tradition of understanding the interdependent values of economic prosperity and environmental quality, both of which constitute important elements of the livability that distinguishes this state and the Portland metropolitan region; and

WHEREAS, residents of the Metro region value having nature near where they live, work, and play and have expressed the desire to keep nature in neighborhoods as a legacy to future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC), composed of elected officials representing the region's local governments, adopted a "Vision Statement" in 2000 to enunciate the region's commitment to improve the ecological health and functionality of the region's fish and wildlife habitat; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council has expressed, as one of four central goals for the region, the aspiration that "The region's wildlife and people thrive in a healthy urban ecosystem," and identified this goal as a priority for near term action; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council has expressed, as a regional objective, the aspiration that "Natural areas, park land and outdoor recreation infrastructure are available near housing and employment" and identified this objective as a priority for near term action; and

WHEREAS, fish and wildlife habitat depends on healthy functioning watersheds and follows the natural contours of the landscape, while political and organizational boundaries frequently split watersheds and divide the natural landscape; and

WHEREAS, residents enjoy trails, greenspaces, streams, and wildlife throughout the region regardless of which local political jurisdiction these resources happen to fall within; and

WHEREAS, protection and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat and the integration of greenspaces into the urban landscape is of a scope and magnitude beyond the reach of any single organization and will require the concerted effort and coordinated action of many individuals and organizations including local, regional, state, and federal agencies, watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, friends groups, building trades firms and organizations, industry groups, environmental groups, businesspeople, and homeowners across the region; and

WHEREAS, Metro, as a regional government, is well positioned to lead regional initiatives involving collaborative action among individuals and organizations throughout the region and the Metro Council has identified, through its strategic planning process, that Metro should serve in this capacity; and

WHEREAS, a successful initiative to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat and integrate greenspaces into the urban environment will require leadership, communication, conservation education, expert assistance, new partnerships, incentives, habitat-friendly development practices, development standards, restoration of degraded habitat, willing-seller acquisition of prime habitat, coordinated and targeted investment, and performance tracking and reporting; and

WHEREAS, Metro operates successful and effective fish and wildlife education programs through the Oregon Zoo, Solid Waste and Recycling Department, Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department, and Planning Department that could be re-directed towards a coordinated regional fish and wildlife initiative; and

WHEREAS, Metro operates habitat restoration initiatives through its Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department that have restored hundreds of acres of streams and upland habitat in the region and these efforts could be an important component to a coordinated regional fish and wildlife initiative; and

WHEREAS, Metro has amassed a considerable foundation of data and expertise in evaluating habitat values, including a region-wide inventory and map of habitat comprising over 80,000 acres that has been classified for its functional values, an investment that could be central to the implementation of a coordinated regional fish and wildlife initiative; and

WHEREAS, Metro's Parks and Greenspaces Department and Planning Department has demonstrated success in integrating trails, streams, and greenspaces into the urban environment and such expertise would be valuable as part of a regional fish and wildlife and greenspaces initiative; and

WHEREAS, Metro has unique skill and expertise in willing-seller acquisition programs, having completed the purchase of more than 8,000 acres of high quality parks and greenspaces property as part of a bond measure approved by the region's voters in 1995, and this skill and expertise will be essential to the willing-seller acquisition element of a regional fish and wildlife initiative; and

WHEREAS Oregon Zoo staff are nationally renowned for their work on species conservation, and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Zoo's "Great Northwest" exhibits emphasize ecosystems proximate to the metropolitan region; and

WHEREAS Metro has authority under State Land Use Goal 5 that provides an important means to create consistency across the landscape in the protection of fish and wildlife habitat; and

WHEREAS, Metro monitors and reports on key regional performance measures relating to habitat and quality of life in the region, a function that will be essential to the ongoing guidance and management for fish and wildlife protection and restoration; and

WHEREAS, Metro provides communications related to fish and wildlife habitat protection, restoration and greenspaces through its Public Affairs and Governmental Relations Department and these activities could be a central component of a regional initiative; and

WHEREAS, Metro's existing fish, wildlife and greenspaces related programs and activities would be more successful and effective if they were aligned behind a single, strategic initiative to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat in the Metropolitan Portland Region; and

WHEREAS, A coordinated regional initiative that establishes consistent and shared habitat standards and goals, Metro can help other jurisdictions, organizations and individuals in the region with a role and stake in habitat protection, restoration and greenspaces become more strategic and effective; so therefore

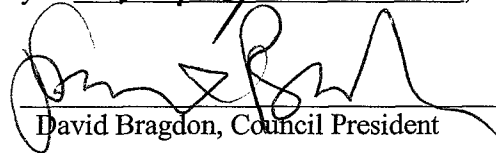
BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council hereby directs the Chief Operating Officer to implement a coordinated regional fish and wildlife habitat protection, restoration and greenspaces initiative with the following provisions:

1. The regional fish and wildlife protection, restoration and greenspaces initiative will be named "Nature In Neighborhoods."
2. Nature in Neighborhoods shall have seven goals: 1) conserve and improve streamside, wetland and floodplain habitat and their connections in watersheds, 2) conserve large areas of contiguous habitat and avoid habitat fragmentation, 3) conserve and improve connections between corridors and upland habitat, 4) promote the use of development practices that are friendly to habitat, 5) restore degraded watershed sites to compensate for adverse ecological effects of land-use practices, and mitigate impacts for new development, 6) Preserve and improve special habitats of concern such as bottom land hardwood forests, wetlands and riverine islands, 7) increase opportunities for residents to experience and enjoy the region's natural surroundings.
3. Activities and programs at Metro's Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department, Planning Department, Solid Waste and Recycling Department, Oregon Zoo, and Public Affairs & Governmental Relations Departments that impact or could impact fish and wildlife habitat restoration or protection shall whenever possible support and coordinate with the Nature in Neighborhoods initiative.
4. Metro shall provide regional leadership to Nature in Neighborhoods by convening, coordinating, communicating, educating, assisting, providing incentives to, focusing and leveraging the talents, skills, resources, and concerted action of the many organizations and individuals who have a role to play and a stake in the outcome of Nature in Neighborhoods.

5. Nature in Neighborhoods shall include five elements: 1) habitat friendly development practices; 2) restoration initiatives; 3) willing seller acquisition; 4) development requirements for streamside habitat; and 5) monitoring and reporting, as outlined in Exhibit A.

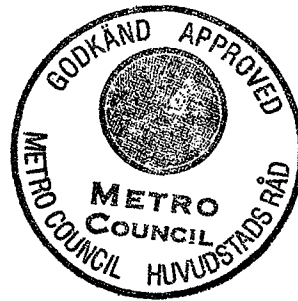
6. Metro will develop a scope of work to define its role in providing technical assistance to cities and counties to comply with the requirements of this ordinance, including implementation of habitat-friendly development practices. In addition, the scope of work shall address Metro's activities that support addressing the Clean Water Act and issues related to urban stormwater management, watershed planning, and pollution control.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 12th day of May, 2005.


David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:


Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney



Nature in Neighborhoods Initiative Description

Nature in Neighborhoods is a regional habitat protection, restoration and greenspaces initiative that inspires, strengthens, coordinates, and focuses the activities of individuals and organizations with a stake in the region's fish and wildlife habitat, natural beauty, clean air and water, and outdoor recreation. Metro plays a lead role in Nature in Neighborhoods, but recognizes that the protection and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat and the integration of greenspaces into the urban environment is a task of scope and magnitude beyond the reach of any one organization; it will take the coordinated and strategic action of many. Nature in Neighborhoods has five elements:

1. *Habitat-friendly development practices*—encouraging development in the future to be kinder to the environment than development in the past using innovative site design, new materials and engineering techniques.
2. *Restoration and stewardship*—building on Metro's successful track record of partnering with others to restore key wetland, streamside and upland sites and naturalist programs that educate the public on the value of natural areas.
3. *Acquisition* – Metro intends to place a bond measure before the voters in 2006 that would create a funding source to acquire critical fish and wildlife habitat in the urban area.
4. *Flexible development standards* – establishing a consistent regional standard for fish and wildlife habitat protection that provides additional support for improving water quality. In new urban areas, the Nature in Neighborhood Initiative promotes planning for growth to protect natural areas better than through past practices.
5. *Monitoring and reporting* – taking responsibility for measuring the progress made in the region on habitat area protection and restoration, reporting on the results and sharing the results with all of the Nature in Neighborhood partners for use in refining the initiative elements.

Metro will provide overall leadership and coordination to the initiative, providing a range of resources and expertise to partner organizations and the region's residents. The initiative will be supported by a Nature in Neighborhoods staff team dedicated solely to the initiative. Resources available in Metro's Planning Department, Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department, Oregon Zoo, Solid Waste and Recycling Department, and Public Affairs & Governmental Relations Departments will be coordinated in support of Nature in Neighborhoods.

Metro will work with its public, nonprofit, and private partners to implement a comprehensive communications strategy that supports and integrates the five initiative elements and elevates the level of awareness, understanding and commitment behind the initiative.

1. Habitat-friendly development practices

Using habitat-friendly development practices, or low impact development (LID), can help a community better protect its streams, fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands, and drinking water supplies as it grows. Several cities in the region are already encouraging the use of these practices, and some developers are making a point of reducing the impacts of the built environment by meeting environmental standards such as LEED¹. Much can be done to encourage habitat-friendly development practices in upland habitats and throughout the region by providing incentives, education, and technical assistance.

The use of these habitat-friendly practices can serve to increase the value of developments both at the outset and over time. Studies have shown that residential and commercial uses near open space and water features are more valuable and desirable. Additionally, innovative stormwater management practices that use natural processes to retain and detain stormwater runoff on-site may be less expensive to construct and maintain. The regional fish and wildlife habitat protection initiative will benefit people in addition to fish and wildlife. Protecting and restoring streamside habitat areas will have a direct positive impact on water quality. Increased management of stormwater runoff on-site through natural processes will also substantially improve water quality while allowing urban-style development to occur.

Metro will establish a Habitat-Friendly Development Practices Program to coordinate efforts to reduce the impacts of new development and collaborate with regional partners to increase public awareness of the value of habitat areas, including activities such as:

1. ***Expert assistance for developers and design awards program.*** Promote habitat-friendly development practices to the development community through a variety of technical assistance, education, and outreach activities. Examples include:
 - Award program to foster and recognize habitat-friendly development projects, including an annual award ceremony and certificates.
 - Sponsor seminars and conferences to promote habitat-friendly development practices.
 - Actively work with the development community to promote habitat-friendly development practices.
2. ***Remove barriers to habitat-friendly development.*** Provide technical assistance to cities and counties to implement fish and wildlife habitat program recommendations, including working with local jurisdictions to identify barriers in local codes that limit habitat-friendly development practices.
3. ***Financial incentives.*** Offer financial incentives for specific building projects that incorporate habitat-friendly development practices, especially those improving habitat conditions.²
4. ***Incorporate habitat priorities with regional transportation funding.*** Establish a priority for funding transportation projects based on their impacts to regionally significant fish and wildlife habitat.³

¹ Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a national program implemented by the U.S. Green Building Council. Portland is recognized as a leader nationwide, with over 40 certified projects.

² Metro currently provides funding to projects in Centers and for Transit-Oriented Development. Projects are encouraged to use habitat-friendly practices.

2. Restoration and stewardship

Restoration is a critical component of an effective Nature in Neighborhoods Initiative. Without active restoration efforts, ecological conditions are likely to deteriorate further, even if most habitat lands are protected through regulations. Stewardship programs publicly acknowledge landowners, businesses and other entities for conserving open space, protecting or restoring habitat areas, making financial contributions or carrying out good stewardship practices in general. These programs, while not widely applied in the Metro area, have much potential for encouraging conservation behavior when combined with other programs.

Metro will take a leadership role to enhance restoration efforts carried out by individuals, cities and counties, non-profits, government agencies, and businesses and increase habitat stewardship throughout the region by supporting the following activities:

1. **Support existing restoration efforts.** Offer technical and/or financial assistance to groups that are actively conducting restoration projects. Examples include assisting with administrative matters, mapping, and coordination.
2. **Identify regional restoration priorities.** Coordinate with existing non-profit and governmental agencies to establish restoration priorities for the region, especially in those watersheds where few restoration activities are occurring.
3. **Establish restoration pilot projects.** Expand successful pilot projects such as the eradication of Japanese Knotweed from the streamside along the Sandy River.
4. **Monitor restoration efforts.** Create a regional geographic information system database drawing on watershed action plans, Metro's regional habitat inventory and other sources of information to help identify watershed restoration priorities and track implementation of restoration and mitigation projects over time
5. **Enhance existing Metro programs.** Coordinate fish and wildlife education messages into ongoing Metro program areas.⁴
6. **Support habitat education.** Coordinate regional messages on fish and wildlife habitat, watershed function, and water quality to encourage people to think on a more broad and time-sensitive scale.
 - a. Increase awareness among schoolchildren, interested public, and property owners about practices that protect clean water and improve fish and wildlife habitat.
 - b. Provide small group "on the ground" environmental education to children and adults focusing on the importance of urban stream corridors for wildlife connectivity, the impact of invasive weeds on wildlife health, and what citizens can do to improve fish and wildlife habitat in their local and regional community.
 - c. Encourage the placement of signs in habitat areas as an important component of an educational program.
 - d. Develop a list of all education programs in the region and determine which are most effective.
 - e. Organize and prioritize a regional education campaign and provide a clearinghouse for education materials and referrals.

³ A criterion could be added to the MTIP funding priorities that focuses on habitat issues, such as culvert replacement or removal, wildlife crossing improvements, or implementation of Green Streets design standards.

⁴ Zoo exhibit on Metro urban fish and wildlife habitat ("Wild in the City) and enhancement of Solid Waste and Recycling programs to target homeowners and developers of residential properties.

7. ***Increase funding available for restoration.*** Seek interagency and non-profit support for increased federal and state grant funding directed at watershed-based restoration activities.⁵
8. ***Stewardship Program.*** Develop a Regional Fish and Wildlife Habitat Stewardship program that recognizes landowners for restoring and protecting habitat on their land.
 - a. Sponsor a yearly award ceremony, provide certificates, and encourage media coverage.
 - b. Develop signed voluntary stewardship agreements between a property owner and Metro or another sponsor for habitat protection.
9. ***Tax incentives for habitat protection and restoration.*** Encourage cities and counties to implement existing property tax incentive programs within the Metro region.⁶

3. Acquisition

The most effective long-term strategy for protecting fish and wildlife habitat is to purchase properties to remain in natural conditions in perpetuity. A major component of Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods Initiative is to initiate a bond measure for acquisition and restoration of regionally significant fish and wildlife habitat. Metro can also undertake other activities to raise dollars and leverage bond money to permanently protect habitat. Metro will undertake the following activities:

1. ***Bond Measure.*** Prepare for initiating and managing a bond measure program, including the following components:
 - a. Coordinate with non-profit groups, local governments, citizens and others to identify regional target areas including habitat in the Damascus and Pleasant Valley areas
 - b. Identify local share funds as part of the bond measure proposal
 - c. Create a challenge grant program for local governments and non-profit organizations to leverage the use of public bond measure funds in acquisition and restoration efforts
 - d. Create a short-term revolving fund to purchase land in targeted areas, implement conservation easements and use surplus funds (resale revenue) to create a funding source for land management purposes
2. ***Pursue grants for acquisition.*** Apply for grants that can lead to targeted acquisition for prime areas, such as opportunities in the Damascus and other new urban area planning.
3. ***Tie future density increases to revenue for habitat.*** Explore the potential of requiring any future upzoning throughout the region to require the purchase of a TDR or a density transfer fee to be used for habitat protection.

Cities and counties also have opportunities to explore methods of funding the purchase of fish and wildlife habitat. Some cities have already implemented programs to purchase or permanently preserve habitat, including:

1. ***Development fees.*** System Development Charge (SDC) programs to purchase floodplains and/or other special habitats.

⁵ Potential funding sources such as National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, USFWS Conservation and Restoration funds, EPA Smart Growth funds, etc.

⁶ Existing state tax incentive programs include the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Management Program (WHCMP) and the Riparian Lands Tax Incentive Program (RLTIP). Neither programs are currently implemented within the urban area, but cities and/or counties could authorize their use to encourage habitat protection and restoration.

2. **Floodplains.** Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants to purchase floodplains, removing development in floodplains from future harm and potentially reducing flood risk throughout a watershed by restoring floodplain functions.

4. Flexible Development Standards for Streamside Habitat and New Urban Areas

The Metro Council proposes to protect streamside habitat (Class I and II Riparian) within the urban growth boundary and upland habitat (Class A and B) in future urban growth boundary expansion areas with flexible development standards. Of the 80,000 acres in Metro's regionally significant habitat inventory, about 41,000 are in Class I and II riparian habitats designated as Habitat Conservation Areas and will receive extra protection. Streamside habitat areas are the most valuable, vulnerable, and in some cases most protected habitats in Metro's habitat inventory. The Nature in Neighborhoods initiative will minimize the impact on fish and wildlife habitat while allowing urban-style development to occur.

This program is intended to change the way development and redevelopment occurs near streams and wetlands, not to impact everyday actions on private property. The program would not prevent development on any property, but would require a change in the way development occurs within Habitat Conservation Areas. In some cases, a requirement for cities and counties to remove barriers to habitat-friendly development practices may, in fact, increase property values by allowing more innovation and potential reduction in stormwater impact fees.

Flexible development standards can provide property owners the ability to develop their properties while protecting some or all the habitat on a site. Some of these tools include:

- Building setback flexibility (e.g., zero or smaller setbacks).
- Clustering development on smaller lots while preserving the remaining habitat.
- Density bonus for protecting habitat.
- Transfer of development rights from one site to another more suited for higher density uses.

Metro Council will consider the regulatory component of the habitat protection program as an amendment of the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan. After acknowledgment by the State Land Conservation and Development Commission, cities and counties within the Metro region will be required to amend their comprehensive plans to be in compliance with the regional habitat protection program. Consistent with Metro's goal of providing regional consistency and local opportunity for flexibility when implementing regional policies, Metro will provide several options for a city or county to comply. Compliance with regional habitat protection requirements will also satisfy state requirements, reducing duplicative efforts.

Future Urban Growth Boundary Expansion Areas

Expectations for urban-style development are different in areas that are brought inside the urban growth boundary in the future. Metro Council supports protecting more habitat in these areas where it is easier to plan for a system of natural habitats integrated with the built environment. The Nature in Neighborhoods initiative will guide how to plan for growth in new urban areas that accounts for the most valuable streamside (Class I and II) and upland (Class A and B) habitats.

5. Monitoring and reporting

Metro will monitor and report to the region on key regional performance measures relating to the success of the region in protecting and restoring habitat areas. As part of the monitoring and reporting element, Metro will track progress in habitat acquisition and restoration efforts and will continue to map the streams, wetlands, floodplains, vegetation and habitats of concern to monitor habitat quality and quantity by watershed. By coordinating with other agencies and jurisdictions that track stream and upland health Metro will present a regional scorecard of progress in achieving performance objectives. These include:

1. Preserve and improve streamside, wetland, and floodplain habitat and connectivity
2. Preserve large areas of contiguous habitat and avoid fragmentation
3. Preserve and improve connectivity for wildlife between riparian corridors and upland wildlife habitat.
4. Preserve and improve special habitats of concern.
5. Promote the use of habitat-friendly development practices.
6. Restore degraded watershed sites to compensate for adverse ecological effects of land use practices and mitigate impacts for new development.

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3. Activities and programs at Metro's Regional Parks and Greenspaces Department, Planning Department, Solid Waste and Recycling Department, Oregon Zoo, and Public Affairs & Government Relations Departments that impact or could impact fish and wildlife habitat restoration or protection shall whenever possible support and coordinate with the Nature in Neighborhoods initiative.
4. Metro shall provide regional leadership to Nature in Neighborhoods by convening, coordinating, communicating, educating, assisting, providing incentives to, focusing and leveraging the talents, skills, resources, and concerted action of the many organizations and individuals who have a role to play and a stake in the outcome of Nature in Neighborhoods.

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ADOPTED by the Metro Council this _____ day of _____, 2005.

David Bragdon, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Daniel B. Cooper, Metro Attorney

EXHIBIT A TO RESOLUTION NO. 05-3574

Nature in Neighborhoods Initiative Description

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2. *Restoration and stewardship*—building on Metro's successful track record of partnering with others to restore key wetland, streamside and upland sites and naturalist programs that educate the public on the value of natural areas.
3. *Acquisition* – Metro intends to place a bond measure before the voters in 2006 that would create a funding source to acquire critical fish and wildlife habitat in the urban area.
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Metro will work with its public, nonprofit, and private partners to implement a comprehensive communications strategy that supports and integrates the five initiative elements and elevates the level of awareness, understanding and commitment behind the initiative.

1. Habitat-friendly development practices

Using habitat-friendly development practices, or low impact development (LID), can help a community better protect its streams, fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands, and drinking water supplies as it grows. Several cities in the region are already encouraging the use of these practices, and some developers are making a point of reducing the impacts of the built environment by meeting environmental standards such as LEED¹. Much can be done to encourage habitat-friendly development practices in upland habitats and throughout the region by providing incentives, education, and technical assistance.

The use of these habitat-friendly practices can serve to increase the value of developments both at the outset and over time. Studies have shown that residential and commercial uses near open space and water features are more valuable and desirable. Additionally, innovative stormwater management practices that use natural processes to retain and detain stormwater runoff on-site may be less expensive to construct and maintain. The regional fish and wildlife habitat protection initiative will benefit people in addition to fish and wildlife. Protecting and restoring streamside habitat areas will have a direct positive impact on water quality. Increased management of stormwater runoff on-site through natural processes will also substantially improve water quality while allowing urban-style development to occur.

Metro will establish a Habitat-Friendly Development Practices Program to coordinate efforts to reduce the impacts of new development and collaborate with regional partners to increase public awareness of the value of habitat areas, including activities such as:

1. ***Expert assistance for developers and design awards program.*** Promote habitat-friendly development practices to the development community through a variety of technical assistance, education, and outreach activities. Examples include:
 - Award program to foster and recognize habitat-friendly development projects, including an annual award ceremony and certificates.
 - Sponsor seminars and conferences to promote habitat-friendly development practices.
 - Actively work with the development community to promote habitat-friendly development practices.
2. ***Remove barriers to habitat-friendly development.*** Provide technical assistance to cities and counties to implement fish and wildlife habitat program recommendations, including working with local jurisdictions to identify barriers in local codes that limit habitat-friendly development practices.
3. ***Financial incentives.*** Offer financial incentives for specific building projects that incorporate habitat-friendly development practices, especially those improving habitat conditions.²
4. ***Incorporate habitat priorities with regional transportation funding.*** Establish a priority for funding transportation projects based on their impacts to regionally significant fish and wildlife habitat.³

¹ Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a national program implemented by the U.S. Green Building Council. Portland is recognized as a leader nationwide, with over 40 certified projects.

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1. **Support existing restoration efforts.** Offer technical and/or financial assistance to groups that are actively conducting restoration projects. Examples include assisting with administrative matters, mapping, and coordination.
2. **Identify regional restoration priorities.** Coordinate with existing non-profit and governmental agencies to establish restoration priorities for the region, especially in those watersheds where few restoration activities are occurring.
3. **Establish restoration pilot projects.** Expand successful pilot projects such as the eradication of Japanese Knotweed from the streamside along the Sandy River.
4. **Monitor restoration efforts.** Create a regional geographic information system database drawing on watershed action plans, Metro's regional habitat inventory and other sources of information to help identify watershed restoration priorities and track implementation of restoration and mitigation projects over time
5. **Enhance existing Metro programs.** Coordinate fish and wildlife education messages into ongoing Metro program areas.⁴
6. **Support habitat education.** Coordinate regional messages on fish and wildlife habitat, watershed function, and water quality to encourage people to think on a more broad and time-sensitive scale.
 - a. Increase awareness among schoolchildren, interested public, and property owners about practices that protect clean water and improve fish and wildlife habitat.
 - b. Provide small group "on the ground" environmental education to children and adults focusing on the importance of urban stream corridors for wildlife connectivity, the impact of invasive weeds on wildlife health, and what citizens can do to improve fish and wildlife habitat in their local and regional community.
 - c. Encourage the placement of signs in habitat areas as an important component of an educational program.
 - d. Develop a list of all education programs in the region and determine which are most effective.
 - e. Organize and prioritize a regional education campaign and provide a clearinghouse for education materials and referrals.

³ A criterion could be added to the MTIP funding priorities that focuses on habitat issues, such as culvert replacement or removal, wildlife crossing improvements, or implementation of Green Streets design standards.

⁴ Zoo exhibit on Metro urban fish and wildlife habitat ("Wild in the City") and enhancement of Solid Waste and Recycling programs to target homeowners and developers of residential properties.

7. ***Increase funding available for restoration.*** Seek interagency and non-profit support for increased federal and state grant funding directed at watershed-based restoration activities.⁵
8. ***Stewardship Program.*** Develop a Regional Fish and Wildlife Habitat Stewardship program that recognizes landowners for restoring and protecting habitat on their land.
 - a. Sponsor a yearly award ceremony, provide certificates, and encourage media coverage.
 - b. Develop signed voluntary stewardship agreements between a property owner and Metro or another sponsor for habitat protection.
9. ***Tax incentives for habitat protection and restoration.*** Encourage cities and counties to implement existing property tax incentive programs within the Metro region.⁶

3. Acquisition

The most effective long-term strategy for protecting fish and wildlife habitat is to purchase properties to remain in natural conditions in perpetuity. A major component of Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods Initiative is to initiate a bond measure for acquisition and restoration of regionally significant fish and wildlife habitat. Metro can also undertake other activities to raise dollars and leverage bond money to permanently protect habitat. Metro will undertake the following activities:

1. ***Bond Measure.*** Prepare for initiating and managing a bond measure program, including the following components:
 - a. Coordinate with non-profit groups, local governments, citizens and others to identify regional target areas including habitat in the Damascus and Pleasant Valley areas
 - b. Identify local share funds as part of the bond measure proposal
 - c. Create a challenge grant program for local governments and non-profit organizations to leverage the use of public bond measure funds in acquisition and restoration efforts
 - d. Create a short-term revolving fund to purchase land in targeted areas, implement conservation easements and use surplus funds (resale revenue) to create a funding source for land management purposes
2. ***Pursue grants for acquisition.*** Apply for grants that can lead to targeted acquisition for prime areas, such as opportunities in the Damascus and other new urban area planning.
3. ***Tie future density increases to revenue for habitat.*** Explore the potential of requiring any future upzoning throughout the region to require the purchase of a TDR or a density transfer fee to be used for habitat protection.

Cities and counties also have opportunities to explore methods of funding the purchase of fish and wildlife habitat. Some cities have already implemented programs to purchase or permanently preserve habitat, including:

1. ***Development fees.*** System Development Charge (SDC) programs to purchase floodplains and/or other special habitats.

⁵ Potential funding sources such as National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, USFWS Conservation and Restoration funds, EPA Smart Growth funds, etc.

⁶ Existing state tax incentive programs include the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Management Program (WHCMP) and the Riparian Lands Tax Incentive Program (RLTIP). Neither programs are currently implemented within the urban area, but cities and/or counties could authorize their use to encourage habitat protection and restoration.

2. ***Floodplains.*** Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants to purchase floodplains, removing development in floodplains from future harm and potentially reducing flood risk throughout a watershed by restoring floodplain functions.

4. Flexible Development Standards for Streamside Habitat and New Urban Areas

The Metro Council proposes to protect streamside habitat (Class I and II Riparian) within the urban growth boundary and upland habitat (Class A and B) in future urban growth boundary expansion areas with flexible development standards. Of the 80,000 acres in Metro's regionally significant habitat inventory, about 41,000 are in Class I and II riparian habitats designated as Habitat Conservation Areas and will receive extra protection. Streamside habitat areas are the most valuable, vulnerable, and in some cases most protected habitats in Metro's habitat inventory. The Nature in Neighborhoods initiative will minimize the impact on fish and wildlife habitat while allowing urban-style development to occur.

This program is intended to change the way development and redevelopment occurs near streams and wetlands, not to impact everyday actions on private property. The program would not prevent development on any property, but would require a change in the way development occurs within Habitat Conservation Areas. In some cases, a requirement for cities and counties to remove barriers to habitat-friendly development practices may, in fact, increase property values by allowing more innovation and potential reduction in stormwater impact fees.

Flexible development standards can provide property owners the ability to develop their properties while protecting some or all the habitat on a site. Some of these tools include:

- Building setback flexibility (e.g., zero or smaller setbacks).
- Clustering development on smaller lots while preserving the remaining habitat.
- Density bonus for protecting habitat.
- Transfer of development rights from one site to another more suited for higher density uses.

Metro Council will consider the regulatory component of the habitat protection program as an amendment of the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan. After acknowledgment by the State Land Conservation and Development Commission, cities and counties within the Metro region will be required to amend their comprehensive plans to be in compliance with the regional habitat protection program. Consistent with Metro's goal of providing regional consistency and local opportunity for flexibility when implementing regional policies, Metro will provide several options for a city or county to comply. Compliance with regional habitat protection requirements will also satisfy state requirements, reducing duplicative efforts.

Future Urban Growth Boundary Expansion Areas

Expectations for urban-style development are different in areas that are brought inside the urban growth boundary in the future. Metro Council supports protecting more habitat in these areas where it is easier to plan for a system of natural habitats integrated with the built environment. The Nature in Neighborhoods initiative will guide how to plan for growth in new urban areas that accounts for the most valuable streamside (Class I and II) and upland (Class A and B) habitats.

5. Monitoring and reporting

Metro will monitor and report to the region on key regional performance measures relating to the success of the region in protecting and restoring habitat areas. As part of the monitoring and reporting element, Metro will track progress in habitat acquisition and restoration efforts and will continue to map the streams, wetlands, floodplains, vegetation and habitats of concern to monitor habitat quality and quantity by watershed. By coordinating with other agencies and jurisdictions that track stream and upland health Metro will present a regional scorecard of progress in achieving performance objectives. These include:

1. Preserve and improve streamside, wetland, and floodplain habitat and connectivity
2. Preserve large areas of contiguous habitat and avoid fragmentation
3. Preserve and improve connectivity for wildlife between riparian corridors and upland wildlife habitat.
4. Preserve and improve special habitats of concern.
5. Promote the use of habitat-friendly development practices.
6. Restore degraded watershed sites to compensate for adverse ecological effects of land use practices and mitigate impacts for new development.