

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING	)	RESOLUTION NO. 24-5391
REVISED PROGRAM CRITERIA FOR THE	)	
PARKS AND NATURE BOND LARGE-SCALE	)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM	)	Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with
	)	Council President Lynn Peterson

WHEREAS, on June 6, 2019, the Metro Council referred to the Metro area voters a ballot measure authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$475,000,000.00 for the purpose of funding natural area and water quality protection and to connect people to nature close to home (the “Bond Measure”); and

WHEREAS, at the general election held on November 5, 2019, the Metro Area voters approved the Bond Measure, thereby creating a program under which a portion of the total Bond Measure proceeds would be allocated to funding large-scale projects that uplift communities by leveraging nature to achieve benefits such as job opportunities, affordable housing and safe, reliable transportation (referred to hereafter as the “Large-Scale Community Visions Program” or the “Program”); and

WHEREAS, in June 2022, the Metro Council approved a Large-Scale Community Visions Program pilot handbook that identified a proposal and project review process for the initial cycle of funding, as well as the eligibility requirements and desired outcomes for Program investments; and

WHEREAS, in Spring of 2023, Council awarded Large-Scale Community Vision pilot funding to three projects: (1) the Trust for Public Land and Oregon State University for acquisition of private timber site in the Tualatin Mountains area, (2) Waterfront Education Park Development by Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Columbia River Inter-tribal Fish Commission, Prosper Portland and (3) Albina Vision Trust for site acquisition adjacent to the Willamette River; and

WHEREAS, following the initial cycle of funding, staff has proposed revisions to the Program that refine certain investment criteria, the process for project review and selection, and desired outcomes for future investments made (the “Program Updates”); now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Metro Council hereby (1) approves the Program updates attached hereto on Exhibit A, and (2) directs the Chief Operating Officer to incorporate the Program updates into subsequent cycles of funding for the Large-Scale Community Visions Program.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 7<sup>th</sup> day of March 2024



\_\_\_\_\_  
Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:

Carrie MacLaren  
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Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

## Exhibit A –Program Criteria

### Program Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

#### Program Outcome and Purpose

The intent of the Program is to fund large-scale capital improvement projects that invest in ecological restoration and complement investments with either housing, transportation, and/or workforce development.

All projects must demonstrate best efforts to meet or exceed the goals of the program: to uplift communities by leveraging nature to achieve benefits such as job opportunities, affordable housing and safe, reliable transportation.

#### Selection Criteria

Projects must meet the eligibility requirements and their ability to address Program principles, as well as racial equity, community engagement and climate resilience criteria.

#### Eligibility Requirements

Project must meet **all** of the following criteria to be eligible:

- Project must have a total nature uplift component of minimum \$2 million, including grant amount
- Project must complement investments in affordable housing, transit or workforce development
- Project must have a committed public partner and result in a publicly owned asset
- Project must be a capital improvement project; either restoration, urban transformation, or neighborhood livability
- Nature uplift work must have 1:1 match (*see Match Requirements for more detail*)
- Overall project, including nature uplift, housing/transportation/economic development, must have 1:2 match (*see page 9 for details*)
- Project must be within Metro’s jurisdictional boundary

#### Principles

Metro Council approved the following principles to guide the program. Applicants seeking Program funding will address **all** of these principles:

- Serve communities through inclusive engagement, transparency and accountability.
- Advance racial equity through bond investments.
- Protect clean water for people, fish and wildlife.
- Protect and restore culturally significant native plant communities.
- Protect, connect and improve habitat for native fish and wildlife.
- Make parks and natural areas more accessible and inclusive.
- Connect more people to the land and rivers of our region.
- Invest in trails for biking and walking.
- Support community-led parks and nature projects.
- Make communities more resilient to climate change
- Uplift communities and leverage nature to achieve job opportunities, affordable housing or safe/reliable transportation.

## Community Engagement and Racial Equity Criteria

Projects must address **all** of the following criteria:

- Meaningfully engage with communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with low incomes and other historically marginalized communities in planning, development of project.
- Prioritize needs identified by communities of color, Indigenous communities, low-income and other historically marginalized groups.
- Provide data that will support tracking outcomes and reporting impacts, particularly as they relate to communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with low incomes and other historically marginalized communities.
- Include strategies to prevent or mitigate displacement and/or gentrification resulting from project investments.
- Set aspirational goals for workforce diversity and use of COBID contractors and work to reduce barriers to achieving these goals; demonstrate accountability by tracking outcomes and reporting impacts.
- Catalyze other investments in transformative regional-scale projects that increase access to nature for people in urban areas and/or improve the resilience of urban natural areas.
- Leverage with public/private investments in affordable housing, transit and connections to local or regional parks.

## Climate Resiliency Criteria

Projects must satisfy **at least one** of the following criteria:

- Protect, connect and restore habitat to support strong populations of native plants, fish and wildlife that can adapt to a changing climate.
- Protect and restore floodplains, headwaters, streams and wetlands to increase their capacity to handle storm water to protect vulnerable communities from flooding.
- Increase tree canopy in developed areas to reduce heat island effects.
- Use low-impact development practices and green infrastructure in project design and development.
- Invest in segments of the regional trail system to expand active transportation opportunities for commuting, recreation and other travel.

## Program Criteria

Projects must meet **at least one** of the following criteria:

- Improve access to nature for people.
- Protect and reclaim rivers, increase tree canopy and/or restore or improve other important natural features in urban areas for the benefit of people and wildlife.
- Create access to nature in a regional or town center, employment area or other areas identified as a priority for investment in Metro's 2040 Growth Concept.
- Foster partnerships between public agencies and between the public and private sectors and/or catalyze private investment by focusing public investments and efforts on specific priority projects.
- Meet a need identified by communities of color, indigenous communities, people with low incomes and other historically marginalized communities.

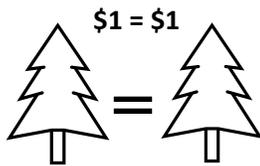
## Match Requirements

Projects that foster partnerships between public agencies and between the public and private sectors and/or catalyze private investments by focusing public investments will be considered strong candidates for large scale community visions funding. The program will encourage projects that leverage additional government and private funding to increase the overall program impacts.

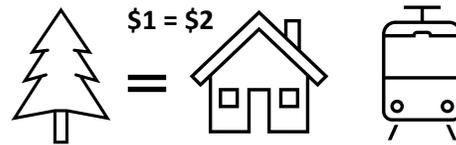
Awarded funds for the nature uplift/habitat restoration element of projects will require a 1:1 match, meaning the project must match \$1 for every \$1 of Metro grant funding. As these projects are meant to be large scale, innovative, and multi-benefit, an overall project match of 1:2 is required, in order to ensure other partners are contributing at magnitude.

So for example, if the project is awarded \$1,000,000 in Program funding, applicants must have a 1:1 match, meaning a minimum of \$2 million total invested in nature uplift. The overall project must have at least a 1:2 match, meaning that the overall project must demonstrate a match of \$2 for every \$1 of Metro LSCV Program funding. Metro funding awards will not exceed one-third the total project cost of successful applications.

### 1:1 nature uplift match



### 1:2 overall project match



Ideally, match would be identified and committed at time of application. However, Metro may consider projects with conditions of approval, including the need to meet matching requirements.

## Qualifying Match

Requirements and limitations for matching funds are as follows:

- The match can be a combination of financial resources and staff time.
- The value of donated or acquired property can be used as a match if the property was donated or acquired within one year of the grant application, as long as no Metro funds (from either the LSCV Program or other Metro programs) were used to acquire the property.
- Volunteer time should be valued based on the Independent Sector's value of volunteer time. The most current information can be found at: <https://independentsector.org/resources/>
- Metro funds or staff time from other programs can be utilized in the project may not be used as a match for the total project.
- Metro funding cannot be used as a match.

It is recognized that some costs must be incurred to adequately prepare the full application. For that reason, the following costs can be included as match if incurred after Metro's invitation to submit a full application:

- Professional services, agency staff time and volunteer time spent on the following activities: site planning, preliminary design, environmental assessment, preparation of cost estimates, construction drawings and specifications, building relationships with potential partners and similar tasks necessary for project preparation.

- When applicable, professional services, agency staff time and volunteer time spent on appraisals, survey, environmental evaluation costs, cultural and historic resource surveys, and building relationships with potential partners for site acquisition.

## Review and Approval Process

The administration of this grant program is designed to be responsive to the needs of potential applicants and flexible enough to assist with the evolving nature of capital improvement projects.

Metro will be reviewing applications on a rolling basis and anticipates doing monthly reviews and announcing selections as soon as practicable after the review process is complete. The timing of the review and selection process are dependent on the volume of applications received and other considerations.

### Metro Council Approval

Metro Council, will review the evaluations, site visit analysis, and conditions of approval. Metro Council will select projects for award. Projects may receive funding lower than requested in the application.

Metro staff will submit a resolution for approval to the Metro Council based on the evaluation scoring and conditions of approval. The Metro Council will consider the information received, and award funds to those proposals that best advance the vision, goals and intent of the Large Scale Community Visions program.

## **STAFF REPORT**

IN CONSIDERATION FOR RESOLUTION NO. 24-5391, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING REVISED PROGRAM CRITERIA TO THE PARKS AND NATURE BOND LARGE-SCALE COMMUNITY VISIONS PROGRAM

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Date: February 20, 2024  
Department: Parks and Nature

Prepared by: Linda Bartolini Venegas,  
she/her

Meeting Date: March 7, 2024

Presenter(s): Jon Blasher, he/him  
Length: 15 minutes

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## **ISSUE STATEMENT**

On November 5, 2019, voters in greater Portland overwhelmingly approved a \$475 million parks and nature bond, creating the large-scale community visions program to support large-scale projects that uplift communities by leveraging nature to achieve benefits such as job opportunities, affordable housing, and safe reliable transportation.

In alignment with a Council approved pilot program handbook, a 2022 solicitation for projects resulted in Metro Council awarding three projects in May 2023 in the pilot round of large-scale community visions funding. Since spring 2023, staff have continued to engage in conversations with local government partners, community organizations, pilot round grantees and other stakeholders to assess how the pilot program worked, identify potential changes and apply any lessons learned to future rounds of the program in order to best serve the goals of the bond measure and meet the needs of the community in the future.

These findings were presented for Metro Council's consideration and discussion at the January 2024 work session. Council directed staff to move forward with updates that could expand opportunities and eligibility for subsequent round of solicitation and award planned for 2024. By approving Resolution No. 24-5391, Metro Council can advance a set of adjustments to program criteria that is intended to better meet the landscape of project opportunities on the ground and create more opportunities for park providers and community partners to apply and potentially receive funding for transformative nature projects.

Council's approval will allow staff to create a notice of funding availability (NOFA) to begin soliciting project ideas as soon as spring 2024. Staff will work with Metro's Chief Operating Office to keep Metro Council updated on progress of the NOFA and projects that are submitted.

## **ACTION REQUESTED**

Council consideration and approval of Resolution No. 24-5391.

## **IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

Council direction has and will continue to shape the large scale community visions program. The program is developed from bond goals and objectives described in the 2019

parks and nature bond as well as program implementation experience gleaned from the 2019 bond's other grant and allocation programs. Projects awarded under the program are expected to deliver on policy outcomes identified in the 2019 parks and nature bond which are to protect land and water and align with regional conservation goals, strengthen our region's climate resilience and benefit communities who haven't benefitted equitably from past investments. Projects awarded under this program will deliver significant capital investments that uplift communities by leveraging nature to improve jobs, housing, and safe transportation.

At the January 2024 work session, Council affirmed the continuation of the approach of the program, retaining the vision and pathway as a catalytic program that funds nature uplift in big-picture, multi-benefit projects of regional significance. Council directed staff to advance the suite of recommended changes to the program, which aim to strike a balance of broadening accessibility of the program across the region while ensuring project readiness and alignment with core bond requirements and criteria.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the Metro Council approve Resolution No. 24-5391.

### **STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

The six programs in the parks and nature bond provide a range of strategies to preserve priority habitat and to bring nature closer to communities across the region. In some ways, the large scale community visions program has similar aims as the Parks and Nature bond's Nature in Neighborhoods grant program, which strives to create nature that's accessible at the community scale and has completed the first of several funding rounds with Parks and Nature bond dollars. What distinguishes the bond's large scale community visions program is the scale of the potential grant awards and required nexus to housing, workforce and transportation elements.

#### *Legal Antecedents*

Metro Council approved the criteria, processes and desired outcomes described in the program handbook through approval of Resolution 22-5269 on June 23, 2022 and directed the Chief Operating Officer to implement the first cycle of funding for the program generally in accordance with the framework described in the program handbook.

#### *Demonstrating impacts and transformation on agency priorities*

Designating awards for projects that utilize investments in nature uplift to leverage regional outcomes in housing, community and economic development and transportation allows for alignment with agency priorities such as urban development, housing, workforce and transportation. The unique focus of this program on the intersection of nature and greening with existing or planned housing and transportation developments allows the agency to advance investments that strengthen climate resilience in communities across the region.

#### *Community voice shaping projects and process*

The Metro Council has directed that the large scale community visions program be driven by community voice in innovative ways. Since the completion of the pilot round, staff have been meeting with park providers, conservation and community partners to understand interest in and barriers to utilizing large scale community visions funding for priority projects across the region. This work involves supporting productive conversations and match making between community partners and jurisdictions across the region to ensure every project awarded has a public owner.

From this broad outreach, staff has also engaged in follow-up, in depth conversations with to further explore project opportunities, as well as following up for feedback with those who expressed interest in the first round and didn't apply. Those in-depth conversations were conducted with Latino Network, Unite Oregon, City of Tigard, Portland Botanical Garden, Street Trust, City of Tigard, Portland State University, Portland Audubon, City of Cornelius, City of Gresham, City of Portland Planning and Sustainability, Clackamas County, Multnomah County, City of Milwaukie, Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation. This engagement provided regional representation, a range of potential projects and a representative sample of what's both worked well and what's presented challenges.

Resolution No. 24-5391 will amend the program criteria to allow the program to better align with this Council direction and meet community need by focusing on specific criteria eligibility: project match, contiguous requirement and public partnership requirement, as well as introducing an ongoing cycle approach. Changes are illustrated in the table below:

<b>Pilot Round Criteria</b>	<b>Updated Criteria</b>
1:5 overall project match	1:2 overall project match
Projects required to have at least two contiguous components; complimentary elements of housing, transportation or workforce development must be adjacent to nature uplift	Complimentary elements of housing, transportation or workforce development do not need to be contiguous, but must demonstrate a unifying nexus that illustrates the connectivity, vision, and desired outcomes of all project pieces
Public partnership required but pilot round allowed conditional awarding for this criterion	Public partnership required to move forward in review process
Annual application cycle	Ongoing application cycle

## **BACKGROUND**

An overview of the program and key updates:

- In June 2022, Metro Council approved a handbook that identified desired outcomes and eligibility requirements and initiated a pilot project solicitation of up to \$10 million.
- In Spring 2023, Metro Council and staff reviewed applications received for the pilot round of funding and the following projects were designated with conditional funding. Staff are coordinating with these projects to ensure eligibility requirements can be satisfied and lead to the successful execution of final funding agreements.

- Trust for Public Lands/Oregon State University - acquisition of private timber site in the Tualatin Mountains area, \$3.5 million
- OMSI/CRTFIC - Waterfront Education Park and OMSI district catalyst on the Willamette River, \$7 million
- Albina Vision Trust – Site acquisition adjunct to Willamette River, \$5 million
- After the completion of the pilot round, Council asked staff to ensure a successful and productive second round of solicitation by identifying potential project opportunities and feedback on the overall feasibility of the program from partners around the region in advance of the solicitation in early 2024.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Is legislation required for Council action?  Yes " No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached?  Yes " No
- What other materials are you presenting today? Large scale community visions program updates (Exhibit A)