

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING THE	)	RESOLUTION NO. 25-5474
PURCHASE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY IN	)	
WASHINGTON PARK FOR USE BY THE	)	Introduced by Chief Operating Officer
OREGON ZOO	)	Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with
	)	Council President Lynn Peterson

WHEREAS, Metro owns and operates the Oregon Zoo pursuant to its statutory and charter authority; and

WHEREAS, the Zoo operates on 65 acres owned by Metro and entirely surrounded by the City of Portland’s Washington Park, and as such its growth is limited; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, an adjacent educational non-profit, the Portland Children’s Museum 2 (“CM2”) ceased operating, leaving the building and its approximately 3.4-acre site vacant to this day; and

WHEREAS, the City of Portland Parks Department (“City”) owns the land and building that formerly housed the CM2 (“CM2 Property”); and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the Zoo and the City began discussing the complimentary nature of their related missions in Washington Park, and City’s willingness to sell the CM2 Property to Metro for Zoo purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Zoo determines the CM2 Property to be an important potential opportunity for future growth and evolution; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, Zoo staff presented the City with a Letter of Interest containing the basic elements of a proposed sale to Metro. Based on the letter, the Zoo and the City began to negotiate the terms of the proposed Purchase and Sale Agreement between the parties, conditioned upon the approval of each party’s elected council; and

WHEREAS, in December of 2024, the City Council approved the sale of the CM2 Property to Metro for the Zoo; and

WHEREAS, Metro Code Section 2.04.050 requires Metro Council approval of all real property purchases and acquisitions; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council authorizes the Chief Operating Officer to execute a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the City of Portland for the purchase of approximately 3.4 acres of land and associated improvements in Washington Park formerly occupied by the Portland Children's Museum 2, and authorizes the Chief Operating Officer to acquire the property in accordance with the terms of the Purchase and Sale Agreement, subject to satisfactory completion of all due diligence and fulfilment of all other contractual conditions precedent, or as otherwise approved by the Office of the Metro Attorney.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 10th day of April, 2025.



---

Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:



---

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

**STAFF REPORT**

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY IN  
WASHINGTON PARK FOR USE BY THE OREGON ZOO

---

Date: March 25, 2025	Presenter(s): Heidi Rahn, she/her, Zoo
Department: Oregon Zoo	Director,
Meeting Date: April 10, 2025	Utpal Passi, he/him, Deputy Director
	Oregon Zoo
Prepared by: Utpal Passi, (503)525-4240, utpal.passi@oregonmetro.gov	Length: 20 minutes

---

**ISSUE STATEMENT**

Council will have the opportunity to decide if Metro should purchase property adjacent to the Zoo for future Zoo purposes, so long as all due diligence conditions are met, and the acquisition of the property presents no undue risk to Metro.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Metro Council approval of the execution of a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the City of Portland and purchase of the former Children’s Museum 2 Property in Washington Park (“CM2 Property”).

**IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

This property purchase invests in the future of the Zoo as a vibrant and growing institution and potentially allows for more flexibility of 2024 Zoo Bond Measure construction inside the current Zoo footprint. Inside the current Zoo campus, nearly all available area is occupied with habitats, guest areas or service areas. Very little unoccupied land remains.

**POLICY QUESTION(S)**

Should Metro purchase the specified property for future Zoo purposes?

**POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER**

Purchase the CM2 Property for future Zoo use, incorporating it into the Zoo Campus and its Conditional Use Master Plan, expanding the Zoo’s area,

or

Forego purchasing the CM2 property. The City will continue to own the property, and the Zoo Campus will not grow in size.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommend approving the real property purchase.

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

The Oregon Zoo stands in the midst of Portland’s Washington Park, a “crown jewel” legacy recreational natural area. The Zoo is bounded on the southeast by the steep ravines and forested slopes of Washington Park, on the south by Highway 26, on the West by the Washington Park parking lot and on the North by the Veterans Memorial and portions of the Hoyt Arboretum. As such, it is effectively “land locked” with limited opportunity for territorial expansion. Meanwhile, inside the Zoo campus, nearly all of the developable land is in use or is planned for redevelopment into animal spaces. Beginning as far back as when OMSI moved to the Willamette waterfront in 1992, the Zoo expressed interest in acquiring the property vacated by OMSI across Knights Boulevard to the southwest. However, in 2001, the Children’s Museum 2 occupied the property. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Children’s Museum 2 closed, and the CM2 Property sat vacant for nearly 5 years. The Zoo and Portland Parks now see the sale of the CM2 Property to the Zoo as an important cooperative step in pursuit of their mutually beneficial missions inside Washington Park.

The CM2 Property is approximately 3.4 acres and is occupied by a 75,250-square foot building plus surrounding service areas. It was first constructed in 1959, with additions in the 1970s and early 2000s. The building is not a viable candidate for rehabilitation and restoration or adaptive reuse for the Zoo, due its configuration, means of construction, seismic deficiencies and advanced stage of deterioration. Because of its size, the cost to demolish the building will be significant.

The separation of the CM2 Property from the larger portion of Washington Park and incorporation into the Zoo’s parcel will be accomplished by property line adjustment. It is likely that the property line adjustment will trigger a Type II amendment to the Zoo’s Conditional Use Master Plan to incorporate the site. Staff will submit an application with Portland Permitting and Development during the due diligence period, and the approval will likely be needed prior to closing. Such an amendment process represents a longer-term effort and involves quasi-judicial land use processes.

Portland Parks has conditioned the sale upon the lease back of 1,800 square feet of office space and 6 parking spaces on a 25-year term to Portland Parks in any redevelopment the Zoo may build on the CM2 Property. The lease will be at market rates, on commercially reasonable terms. The leaseback is indirectly advantageous to the Zoo as it will allow Portland Parks a hub around which to deploy park rangers and other parks personnel responsible for public safety in the parking lot, patrols around the Zoo boundary in the park, and for park maintenance.

The purchase will provide the Zoo with additional area in which to operate and will ultimately result in upgraded levels of service to the public.