

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING THE ) RESOLUTION NO. 25-5499  
OREGON ZOO’S 2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN )  
) Introduced by Chief Operating Officer  
) Marissa Madrigal in concurrence with  
) Council President Lynn Peterson

WHEREAS, the Oregon Zoo has developed a strategic plan, attached as Exhibit A, to guide the Zoo’s work in the next three years towards the Zoo’s mission to “Connect Our Community to the Wonder of Wildlife to Create a Better Future for All;” and

WHEREAS, the strategic planning process was informed by community and zoo visitor input, Metro Councilor direction during the campus planning process, and the anticipated transformative shifts that will guide the trajectory of our community over the next ten years;


WHEREAS, the strategic plan identifies the following focus area goals: “Transform the Campus,” “Increase Conservation Impact,” “Enhance the Zoo Experience,” and it outlines strategic priorities for each focus area;

WHEREAS, for each of the focus area goals, Zoo staff have identified a set of strategies and actions to attain those goals within a certain timeframe;

WHEREAS, approval of the Zoo’s strategic plan by its governing body is a requirement for accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metro Council approves the Oregon Zoo’s 2025-2027 Strategic Plan and authorizes the Metro Chief Operating Officer to implement the Strategic Plan.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 22nd day of May, 2025.

  
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Lynn Peterson, Council President

Approved as to Form:

  
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Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

# Exhibit A

## 2025 – 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

As we introduce our 2025–2027 strategic plan, we celebrate the achievements of our previous plan: upgraded habitats that enhance animal wellbeing, expanded species recovery efforts and conservation partnerships, inspiring new guest experiences and much more. We completed our commitments from the 2008 zoo bond measure and received support from our community to keep going.

This plan continues to build on that progress. It outlines the Oregon Zoo’s goals and priorities for the coming years, incorporating community input and Metro Council guidance gained during our recent campus planning process. At the core of everything is our mission: Connecting our community to the wonder of wildlife to create a better future for all.

There has never been a more important time to come **together for wildlife.**





OUR MISSION

Connect our community to the wonder of wildlife  
to create a better future for all

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Transform  
the Campus

Increase  
Conservation  
Impact

Enhance the  
Zoo Experience

UNWAVERING COMMUNITY TRUST, ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

OUTCOMES

We create  
innovative spaces  
and experiences  
that inspire  
and delight.

Our spaces are  
welcoming,  
inclusive and  
accessible.

Zoo operations  
are environmentally  
sustainable and  
climate resilient.

Our communities  
understand  
our conservation  
impact.

We model  
collaboration for  
conservation.

We offer  
experiences  
that foster  
wildlife-friendly  
behaviors.

Our communities  
recognize us  
as a leader in  
animal wellbeing  
and care.

CORE COMMITMENTS



Staff Engagement  
and Development



Planning and  
Evaluation



Financial and  
Operational Efficiency



Diversity, Equity  
and Inclusion



Teamwork and  
Collaboration

## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

# Transform the Campus

### Maintain public trust through accountability and communication

- Set up citizens' oversight committee accountability
- Establish metrics, monitoring and reporting
- Create a communication strategy (internal and external)
- Engage public through listening sessions, focus groups and/or open houses
- Meet and maintain AZA accreditation standards

### Build staff capacity for design construction and operation

- Build capacity to manage guest and animal experiences through construction
- Gain subject matter expertise to drive innovative design of infrastructure
- Develop team, tools, structures and processes to develop zoo campus
- Include subject matter input on designing exhibits for animal wellbeing

### Use construction projects as ways to contribute to the regional economy

- Advance equity in workforce trades according to Metro guidelines

### Use cohesive campus design to support guest needs and animal wellbeing

- Use data to help drive improvements in guest and animal experience
- Implement a zoo-wide interpretive plan to assess existing exhibit content and inform future exhibit content and experience design with a focus on storytelling and experiential learning
- Implement front-end, formative and/or summative evaluation for exhibits
- Improve circulation and accessibility including pathways and walkways
- Improve zoo wayfinding

### Build technology infrastructure to support future needs

- Analyze the zoo's technical needs and risks
- Develop technology roadmap and investment strategy

### Improve operational sustainability and climate resilience

- Develop zoo-wide sustainability priorities
- Design to mitigate climate impacts on guests and animals
- Implement campus-wide utility plan including power generation and distribution

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

# Increase Conservation Impact

## Increase our species recovery programs

- Collaborate to determine species and evaluate infrastructure needs
- Increase staff capacity to support conservation breeding and other recovery programs
- Increase public-facing exhibits focused on our species recovery work to enhance conservation education opportunities
- Ensure our ability to also respond to unanticipated wildlife needs that arise
- Showcase conservation action publicly

## Diversify conservation funding sources

- Increase federal and state grant funding
- Initiate two new funding partnerships through ESG or other corporate sponsors
- Expand donor base for conservation philanthropy through storytelling and experiences
- Explore raising additional funds through new on-grounds revenue sources
- Develop annual conservation impact report to support fundraising effort

## Elevate and promote conservation brand internally and externally

- Increase public speaking, presentation and tabling opportunities at public-facing events
- Continue to leverage earned, owned and paid media to highlight conservation stories
- Regularly highlight conservation success stories in team meetings, newsletters and intranet platforms
- Identify and train conservation mission ambassadors across divisions and vendors
- Engage program youth in conservation messaging and brand development

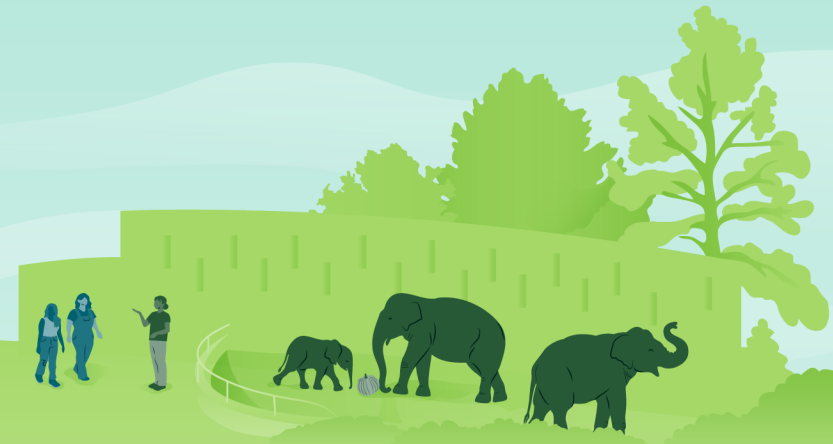
## Leverage our zoo reach, experience and programs to connect our community to conservation

- Execute community-driven conservation partnerships annually, leveraging the zoo's influence to engage and empower communities in taking direct action for wildlife
- Build programs focused on cultivating wildlife conservation identities in youth
- Lead public-facing wildlife advocacy initiatives annually
- Initiate a community-level action for each recovery species
- Increase federal and state lobbying efforts
- Elevate and honor Indigenous leadership for wildlife
- Advance global conservation priorities through community-led partnerships



## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

# Enhance the Zoo Experience



### Enhance guest and animal experience to support wellbeing and conservation

- Collaborate on animal population plan to promote wellbeing, enhance guest experience and advance the zoo's campus planning and conservation goals
- Use training and enrichment along with animal wellbeing monitoring to extend animal activity on exhibit
- Create innovative ways to engage guests at habitats when animals are not visible
- Use science and wellbeing measures in decision-making
- Maintain AZA animal wellbeing and accreditation standards

### Deliver experiences that motivate guests to advocate and take action for wildlife

- Increase opportunities for deeper guest experiences that connect them to the zoo's mission
- Invest in an interpretive framework that emphasizes storytelling and promotes our conservation messaging
- Upgrade and expand exhibits to showcase our species recovery work
- Evaluate guests' readiness to engage in conservation behaviors
- Connect all guest-facing operations to our conservation mission

### Create a welcoming and inclusive environment that inspires joy

- Evaluate current guest experience survey and collection methods
- Understand guest needs, based on data and research, to determine events and evaluate resources needed to be successful
- Create interactive, animal-inspired areas that encourage guests to play, explore and engage
- Increase multi-lingual staff and interpretation material
- Add community partners to increase access for those who don't currently visit the zoo
- Increase accessibility for guests with physical and unapparent disabilities

### Remove current barriers to guest experience

- Participate in Transportation Plan to navigate limited parking resources
- Continue to improve amenities (food, condition of grounds, etc.)
- Improve ticketing experience for all abilities
- Mitigate guest and animal impact during construction

### Collaborate to deliver a unified guest and animal experience

- Create onboarding and staff training that includes animal wellbeing standards, conservation impacts and best practices for delivering welcoming experiences for all
- Create and maintain structures for internal collaboration and communication
- Communicate culture and behavior norms for success and reinforce positive behaviors
- Share positive guest impacts among staff and celebrate conservation wins
- Maintain guest experience, attendance and revenue goals during the campus plan construction

KEY METRICS OF SUCCESS

Transform the Campus

Citizens’ Oversight Committee

Annual report to Metro Council finds that the zoo is delivering on the bond measure commitments and managing finances responsibly

SITES certification

Certification achieved for all applicable projects

Construction workforce make-up meets Metro’s goals

- 20% for apprentices
- 10% for women
- 23% for persons of color

Increase Conservation Impact

Double our species recovery programs in the next 5 years

Two new species recovery programs initiated by 2027

Raise \$1 million annually for species recovery efforts

Enhance the Zoo Experience

Guest Experience

- Improved guest experience scores
- Decrease in percentage of guests reporting non-visible animals
- Guests associate the zoo with positive animal care and wellbeing
- Guests positively connect the zoo to conservation

Animal Experience

- Increase in animal training and enrichment activities
- Increase in percentage of time animals choose guest-visible areas in their habitats
- Wellbeing monitoring indicates positive animal experiences

Staff Experience

- Staff and on-site partners understand how their role connects to conservation
- Staff understand how their role connects to animal wellbeing

CORE COMMITMENTS



Staff Engagement and Development

We prioritize staff success through effective communication and by fostering a respectful, safe and supportive work environment.



Planning and Evaluation

We use data-driven decision-making and collaboration to continuously assess program effectiveness, ensuring alignment with our mission and create efficiency.



Financial and Operational Efficiency

We manage our resources responsibly, embracing innovation and focusing on continuous improvement to ensure a better future for the zoo.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

We advance diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility with our staff and community by fostering a welcoming space, building meaningful relationships and ensuring equitable opportunities and access for all.



Teamwork and Collaboration

We foster healthy relationships, encourage respectful discussions and leverage diverse perspectives to solve problems.



**STAFF REPORT**

IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 25-5499, FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING THE OREGON ZOO’S 2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

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Date: May 20, 2025	Prepared by: Maureen Newman
Department: Oregon Zoo	Presenter(s): Heidi Rahn, she/her, Zoo Director, heidi.rahn@oregonzoo.org
Meeting Date: May 22, 2025	Length: 20 minutes

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**ISSUE STATEMENT**

The Oregon Zoo has developed a strategic plan, attached to Resolution No. 25-5499 as Exhibit A, to guide the Zoo's work in the next three years towards our mission of **creating a better future for wildlife**.

**ACTION REQUESTED**

Staff seeks Metro Council approval of Oregon Zoo's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan.

**IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES**

- Advance the Oregon Zoo’s mission of connecting our community to the wonder of wildlife to create a better future for all.
- Maintain accreditation by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. First accredited in 1974, the Oregon Zoo is one of only two zoos in the country to be continuously accredited for 50 years.
- Allow Zoo resources to prioritize the three focus areas: transform the campus, increase conservation impact, and enhance the Zoo experience.

**POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER**

Does Council approve the Oregon Zoo's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan?

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends Metro Council approve the Oregon Zoo's 2025-2027 Strategic Plan.

**STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

The Zoo's strategic plan emphasizes three focus areas and multiple goals within each focus area.

**Alignment with Metro Council Priorities**

The Zoo's strategic plan supports the plans and goals of the Oregon Zoo 2024 Campus Plan adopted by Council in September 2024.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

None