



# 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure

*Engagement summary*

*September 2018 – April 2019*

**Public service**

*We are here to serve the public  
with the highest level of  
integrity.*

**Excellence**

*We aspire to achieve exceptional  
results*

**Teamwork**

*We engage others in ways that foster  
respect and trust.*

**Respect**

*We encourage and appreciate  
diversity in people and ideas.*

**Innovation**

*We take pride in coming up with  
innovative solutions.*

**Sustainability**

*We are leaders in demonstrating  
resource use and protection.*

**Metro's values and purpose**

We inspire, engage, teach and invite people to preserve and enhance the quality of life and the environment for current and future generations.

If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the convention center, put out your trash or drive your car – we’ve already crossed paths.

**So, hello. We’re Metro – nice to meet you.**

In a metropolitan area as big as Portland, we can do a lot of things better together. Join us to help the region prepare for a happy, healthy future.

**Stay in touch with news, stories and things to do.**

[oregonmetro.gov/news](http://oregonmetro.gov/news)

**Follow oregonmetro**



**Metro Council President**

Lynn Peterson

**Metro Councilors**

Shirley Craddick, District 1

Christine Lewis, District 2

Craig Dirksen, District 3

Juan Carlos González, District 4

Sam Chase, District 5

Bob Stacey, District 6

**Auditor**

Brian Evans

600 NE Grand Ave.

Portland, OR 97232-2736

503-797-1700



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Overview</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Stakeholder table</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Phase I</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Council direction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Six funding areas</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Phase II: Engagement</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Phase III: Sharing the package</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>What we heard and how we responded</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendix A: Phase I engagement summary</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Appendix B: Stakeholder roundtable meetings final report</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<b>Appendix C: Phase II engagement reports</b> .....	<b>63</b>
<b>Appendix D: Phase III engagement summary</b> .....	<b>128</b>
<b>Appendix E: Survey</b> .....	<b>146</b>

## OVERVIEW

In spring 2019 the Metro Council directed staff to begin shaping a potential parks and nature bond measure. Using both the Parks and Nature System Plan and Metro’s Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Metro staff created an engagement strategy that would elevate the voices of Indigenous communities, communities of color and other historically marginalized groups while also continuing to tap into the deep knowledge of the conservation practitioners, advocates and park providers throughout the region.

This summary reflects the feedback gathered throughout three engagement phases from August 2018 to May 2019.

The engagement goals for all three phases were to respond to community needs, elevate communities of color, advance racial equity, strengthen awareness and trust in Metro, support stronger relationships between organizations and report back to the community.

---

## TIMELINE

<b>Phase I</b> August – December	Get feedback from a diverse group of community, conservation, recreation and government leaders to shape the funding framework that advances Metro’s parks and nature mission through a racial equity lens.
<b>Council Direction</b> January	Three Council work sessions in January 2019 gave staff defined program areas and gave direction on outcomes that shaped broad criteria categories.
<b>Phase II</b> February – March	Each program area engaged targeted stakeholder groups to respond to Council direction. Feedback shaped project selection criteria and methods.
<b>Phase III</b> April - May	Community and leaders’ forums, surveys, responses to letters and meetings with agency staff and elected officials gathered input on the allocation of funding to each program area.
<b>Referral</b> June	Two Council work sessions in May prior to the Council consideration of the bond referral on June 6.

---

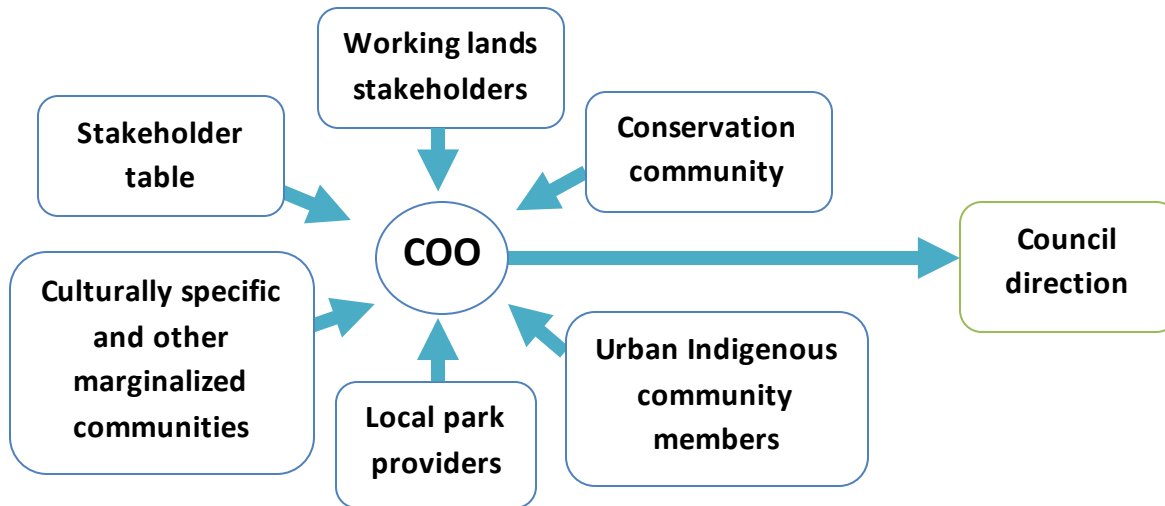
## STAKEHOLDER TABLE

A group of key stakeholders from throughout the Portland metropolitan area were convened to advise the Metro Chief Operating Officer on a framework for a potential 2019 parks and nature bond measure. The intention of these discussions was to advise on topics such as values; incorporating racial equity; targets for investments in six funding areas; and

criteria for investment prioritization, decision-making and oversight. The Stakeholder Table included representatives of community-based organizations, conservationists, trails and parks advocates, equity advocates, businesses, philanthropy and elected leaders from across the region.

Four meetings were held from September to November 2018, and two additional meetings occurred from March to April 2019.

## PHASE I



Stakeholder group	Engagement
<b>Conservation community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 people interviewed</li> <li>• Nov. 16 forum   35 people from 27 organizations</li> </ul>
<b>Local park providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 47 people from 26 local park agencies interviewed</li> <li>• Oct. 4   Regional park director meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Culturally specific and other marginalized communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 community leaders in planning cohort, representing community-based organizations and conservation organizations</li> <li>• Sept. 22 and 26, 2018   90 people attended two community forums</li> </ul>
<b>Urban Indigenous community members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sept. 14, Sept. 27, Oct. 22   11 Indigenous community members attended three meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Working lands stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 people interviewed</li> </ul>





## COUNCIL DIRECTION

In January 2019 the Metro Council held three work sessions. The council defined the outcomes of the parks and nature bond investments that would fulfill parks and nature’s mission while advancing racial equity. Based on these outcomes, the council considered the four investment areas of the 2006 bond measure – acquiring land, major improvements to parks and trails, local share to regional park providers and capital grants – and determined that a new framework would be needed if we were to elevate benefits to people and their experience of nature.

The Metro Council defined six program investment areas and directed staff to create racial equity, climate resilience and programmatic criteria for each of the six investment areas.



## SIX FUNDING AREAS

<b>Protect and restore land</b>	Protect and connect greater Portland’s special places, especially river and stream banks, oak and prairie habitat, wetlands and culturally significant sites, by purchasing land from willing sellers and restoring it to support plants, animals and people.
<b>Support local projects</b>	Distribute money to cities, counties and park providers across greater Portland to protect land, restore habitat, and build and care for parks that connect people to nature in local communities.
<b>Award community grants</b>	Support innovative approaches to caring for nature and creating public access at the community scale by awarding Nature in Neighborhoods grants, with an emphasis on historically marginalized communities.
<b>Take care of Metro parks</b>	Provide safe, welcoming places to connect with nature by completing newer nature parks and maintaining water systems, trails, bathrooms and other amenities at older parks like Oxbow and Blue Lake.
<b>Create trails for walking and biking</b>	Secure land to build new trails and construct missing sections, fulfilling greater Portland’s vision for a network of trails where people can relax, exercise and commute.
<b>Advance large-scale community visions</b>	Help deliver large-scale projects that uplift communities by leveraging nature to achieve benefits such as job opportunities, affordable housing and safe, reliable transportation.

## PHASE II – ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of phase II engagement was to work with specific programmatic stakeholders in creating project selection criteria for each program area, while being responsive to the Phase I input. The following pages describe the engagement approach for each program area, the input we received and how that input was incorporated into the proposed bond package.

Funding area	Who	Approach
<b>Protect and restore</b>	Conservation community and Indigenous community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation community including: non-profits, watershed councils, agencies, regional park districts and indigenous community members.</li> <li>• Local tribal traditional ecological knowledge keepers. Indigenous community members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• April 5   32 people from 24 organizations attended a conservation forum</li> <li>• Jan. – March   contractor who is a member of the Indigenous community conducted small group and one-on-one discussions with Indigenous community members.</li> </ul>
<b>Trails</b>	A mixed group of community members interested in trails, local agency staff and consultants	Solicited input on how to prioritize trail investments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 7 open house   30 people</li> <li>• April 24 Regional Trails Forum   49 people</li> </ul>
<b>Capital investments on Metro parks</b>	Community members interested in improvements to Metro parks including Glendoveer Nature Trail, Willamette Falls, Newell Creek Canyon and Canemah Bluff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 15 and March 18 Glendoveer Nature Trail community forums   40 people</li> <li>• March 19 Community meeting in Oregon City   7 people</li> </ul>
<b>Local share</b>	Park directors of local jurisdictions and park districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 12 meeting hosted by The Intertwine Alliance   10 people</li> </ul>

**Capital grants**

Agency and community organizations that were awarded capital grants or their partners; grant review committee members

- Feb. 19 Focus group | 11 people

**Large scale  
community  
vision**

Focused discussion with stakeholder table

- Phase II stakeholder meetings
-

## PHASE III – SHARING THE PACKAGES

### Community forums

Metro held community forums on the criteria for the six program areas. The same community members that participated in the September forums were invited back to hear how their feedback was incorporated and identify any criteria that may not be as effective at addressing their community's needs. There were also opportunities to discuss the implementation of Metro's housing bond and priorities for a potential 2020 transportation investment measure.



April 16 and 20 Community Forums | 43 people

### Community hosted focus groups

Metro contracted with the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), Unite Oregon and the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) to engage with their communities. They shared the specific criteria related to the Take Care of Metro Parks program area and discussed which criteria would be effective at addressing their community's needs. NAYA and Unite Oregon held focus groups. APANO conducted outreach to South Asian community members living in Washington County through one on one conversations and held one focus group in Vietnamese with people from across the region.

April 15 NAYA Forum | 26 participants

April 25 Unite Oregon Forum | 18 participants

April 17-24 APANO | 8 one-on-one interviews

April 19 APANO focus group | 15 participants

## Community Leaders' Forum

Leaders representing a wide variety of community based organizations were invited to have a similar discussion about parks and nature, affordable housing and transportation investments. Each table had an opportunity to reflect on the criteria of one of the six program areas and discuss how effective they will be at advancing racial equity and climate resilience within the parks and nature mission.



April 26 Community Leaders' Forum | 33 people

## Survey

An online survey was used to offer people the opportunity to weigh in on their priorities for a proposed parks and nature bond renewal. The survey was promoted through Metro's social media channels and partner networks. Participants were asked to select their top two priorities among six proposed investment areas – and, within those two areas, rate the importance of proposed criteria to select future projects. The areas selected as top priorities most frequently were “Protect and restore land” and “Take care of Metro parks,” followed by “Build more trails,” “Support local projects,” “Advance large-scale visions” and “Award community grants.”

April 15 – May 15 | 711 People responded

## Letters

Metro received 31 letters, several signed by multiple organizations, offering comments that helped define the six program investment areas, shape the criteria and determine the allocation of funds.

- 3 letters representing 7 trails-related organizations
- 4 letters representing 7 culturally specific organizations
- 7 letters signed by 26 conservation advocates representing 18 organizations
- 6 letters representing 11 local park directors
- 2 letters from soil and water conservation districts

Additionally, staff was responsive to all meeting requests to share updates on the bond, answer questions and get feedback. These include Friends of Lone Fir Cemetery, Happy Valley City Council, The Intertwine Alliance Summit, Metro's Committee on Racial Equity, Metro's Parks and Nature Equity Advisory Committee, East Portland Parks Coalition and the Metro Policy Advisory Committee.

## WHAT WE HEARD AND HOW WE RESPONDED

### Allocate enough funds to do this work right

*“With another 500,000 people moving to the region and property values having escalated we feel strongly that Metro should make a bigger ask than the 2006 bond.”*

#### What we heard

More funding will be needed to continue Metro’s unique role in protecting and restoring water and habitat while advancing racial equity and providing access to nature.

#### How we responded

Expected bond investment total increased to \$475 million while keeping the same tax rate.

### Protecting land and water can contribute to regional conservation goals and benefit communities of color

*“Water is life. Clean, healthy water and rivers benefits everyone – flora, fauna and humans.”*

#### What we heard

People across the board expressed the importance of clean water, from the protection of headwaters to the restoration of floodplains.

Protect culturally significant plants and salmon, steelhead and lamprey.

Protect rare species and diverse ecosystems such as oak and prairie.

Prioritize access to water and gathering spaces for cultural practices.

Prioritize habitat connectivity.

Protect land both inside and outside the urban area.

#### How we responded

\$155 million is allocated to protect 3,500 to 4,500 acres of land.

The broad suite of input has been integrated throughout the 26 target areas and the criteria that will be used to identify specific lands to acquire.

One to two large-scale restoration projects will restore plant communities significant to Indigenous people.

## Improve existing parks

*"Before we go to new areas, let's improve what we have. This allows us to build the good will to then go on doing new projects."*

*"It is better to improve existing parks and provide access to better trails for the elderly and people with disabilities and with different kinds of needs."*

## Provide access to nature for underserved communities

*"What should we do to better know nature? Having parks closer is better to get knowledge and connections. This can lead to later going further out."*

### What we heard

Metro parks and natural areas connect people to nature. It's important to make these special places more welcoming to people who have not had the best access to nature.

The same message applies to local parks. People support repair and replacement of existing park facilities.

Make parks universally accessible for people with disabilities.

It's important to have nature close to home – especially in communities that face barriers to enjoying the outdoors.

Create opportunities for cultural, multi-generational gatherings and healing spaces.

Provide access to water.

### How we responded

\$98 million is allocated to upgrade critical infrastructure, improve accessibility beyond ADA requirements and finish carrying out the visions that community helped create at 5-6 nature parks.

Could open 1-2 additional parks to increase the opportunities to connect people with nature.

\$92 million to partner with cities, counties and local park providers to fund more than 150 local projects.

## Support communities in their capacity to initiate and lead nature-based projects

*“The bond should create resources for capacity building for community of color-led organizations to scale up their ability to conceive of, design and build needed parks and open space assets.”*

### What we heard

Increase funding to the capital grants program.

Identify and ease barriers that prevent culturally specific communities from successfully applying, including match requirements and relationships with local agencies.

Flexibility

Participatory grant making

### How we responded

\$40 million allocated to the capital grant program to support innovative approaches to caring for nature and creating public access at the neighborhood scale.

Flexible match requirement will reduce barrier for culturally specific communities while still offering maximizing the opportunity to leverage.

Specific racial equity and climate resiliency criteria have been added that will prioritize projects initiated and led by culturally specific organizations.

Resources are being identified to offer technical assistance and capacity building support.

## Prioritize projects that will spark multiple benefits

*“I want everyone to have access, but do local parks lead to gentrification and pricing people out? Add programs that help keep people in place.”*

*“Simply put, this bond can accomplish multiple outcomes: clean air, clean water, healthy ecosystems, public health, economic prosperity, social equity, and more.”*

### What we heard

Coordinate with affordable housing and transportation investments as a method of stabilizing neighborhoods and reducing displacement.

Seek partnerships that will achieve benefits in education, public health, economic prosperity and stable neighborhoods.

### How we responded

\$50 million for projects that uplift communities by leveraging nature to achieve benefits such as job opportunities, affordable housing, and safe, reliable transportation.

\$40 allocated to create trails for walking and biking.



Projects that are part of a strategy to prevent or minimize gentrification and displacement will be prioritized.

Climate resiliency criteria have been created for the bond as a whole as well as within each program area.

### **Commit to ongoing engagement**

*“From physically getting to a place to knowing it is there to having amenities, community engagement will drive success.”*

#### **What we heard**

People want more opportunities to continue shaping parks and nature projects as we finalize the bond – and, if it passes, carry out each project.

To truly achieve racial equity outcomes, communities of color need to be integrally engaged as Metro and its partners develop the bond measure, shape projects and carry them out.

#### **How we responded**

Meaningful, inclusive community engagement practices will be required for all bond funded projects, including those projects managed by local agency partners or grant recipients.

Metro will support local agencies and community organizations with effective engagement approaches.

### **Advance racial equity**

*“Increased investment is critical because people of color in the region continue to lag significantly behind whites in access to park, income, wealth, homeownership, among a host of other metrics . . .”*

#### **What we heard**

Identify institutional barriers that get in the way of grassroots capabilities

Approaches that prevent displacement

Create access to STEM education for at-risk or marginally affected youth

Build economic prosperity through career pathways and contracting practices

#### **How we responded**

Developed community engagement and racial equity criteria that all projects and programs must satisfy.

Meaningful engagement

Projects identified by communities of color, Indigenous communities and historically marginalized groups

Accountability for tracking outcomes

Accurately portray history, recognizing trauma and restoring relationships

Reporting impacts

Removing barriers to increase contracting for COBID firms

Aggressive goals for workforce diversity

### Commit to accountability

*“Basically weaving more equity language throughout in a way that yields/has accountability and follow through.”*

#### What we heard

Create an impact analysis method that can assess how past bond investments may have perpetuated disparities and identify ways that new investments can advance racial equity and create more robust economies for communities of color.

Who decides how money is spent?

Who will be tracking how well the criteria are being applied?

#### How we responded

Racial equity criteria require all program areas to demonstrate accountability for tracking outcomes and reporting impacts, particularly as they relate to communities of color, Indigenous communities, low-income and other historically marginalized communities.

An independent community advisory committee will review progress in the implementation of the bond measure, including oversight of Metro’s efforts to meet the racial equity and climate resiliency criteria.

### Improve the way Metro does parks and nature work, beyond this bond renewal

*“Informing the community, education and providing transportation”*

#### What we heard

Access to nature is more than geographic proximity. Approaches related to planning and design, construction, activities in the park and transportation options all need to be considered.

#### How we responded

Parks and Nature’s Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan outlines department-wide approaches to our work. This will identify the actions that staff will address within and beyond the direction in the parks and nature bond measure.