

Summer 2024 Parks and Nature quarterly update

Covering bond activities and investments from April–June 2024



BOND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMPLETED: **April–June 2024**

Staff have completed the following outreach across bond programs in the last quarter:

- An online Willamette Cove survey to gauge the types of amenities and features community members would like to see at the site in the future received over 2,200 unique responses.
- Two information sessions for the Lone Fir project and an online survey, with over 150 responses, provided an opportunity for people who were not able to attend those events to learn about the current state of the project and to provide feedback on the updated designs.
- A self-guided open house and survey soliciting feedback on preliminary designs for the Blue Lake Park renovation project is open through mid-September. Feedback received through this engagement will help narrow down plans to a single preferred design.

- An April 4 open house about the large scale community visions program hosted about 35 individuals representing a range of organizations.
- The protect and restore team met with 12 park providers to discuss priorities for land acquisition.
- The protect and restore team met with 33 landowners (9 new) to discuss potential acquisition opportunities.

BOND REPORTING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES COMPLETED:

April–June 2024

In July 2024, Parks and Nature staff presented to the Metro Council an update on the work to respond to findings and recommendations in the [audit of the early work of the 2019 parks and nature bond](#), which focused on whether and how Metro was prepared to increase access to parks, trails and natural areas. This update to the Metro Council, which you can watch [here](#) mirrors the video explainer update that staff

shared with the oversight committee this past spring.

BOND ACTIVITIES AND INVESTMENTS COMPLETED: **April–June 2024**

Protect and restore land activities from April–June 2024
oregonmetro.gov/protect-and-restore-land

The team continues outreach to landowners across the region to create a pipeline of opportunities for acquisition in alignment with the targets and goals approved by the Metro Council in 2022 and is seeing results of its consistent outreach. Most recently, the team acquired a 26.9-acre property in the Sandy River target area. The property contains healthy upland forest with good canopy cover, multi-layered shrub communities and a diverse forest floor plant community. The forest has 75–100-year-old Douglas fir trees, with Western red cedar also present. Conservation of the property helps achieve the objective for this target area of protecting and connecting public lands along wildlife corridors used by large mammals such as

black-tailed deer, cougar, elk and black bear that extend from the floodplain areas of the Sandy River to Larch Mountain and east to the foothills of Mount Hood. In addition to upland wildlife corridors, conservation of this property protects a portion of Cat Creek, retaining shade and healthy stream conditions, and contributing to water quality downstream into Gordon Creek and the Sandy River. As of end of June 2024, the team has completed 25 acquisitions totaling 824.2 acres and 0.44 miles of trail right-of-way across 16 target areas.

See more specific information about acquisitions in the [appendix of this report](#).

Local share activities completed from April–June 2024

oregonmetro.gov/localshare

The local share team is working with the region's park providers to submit priority projects for bond local share funding. Most recently, work is underway to finalize agreements for Tigard and THPRD for additional projects. The team is in many conversations with a range of other park providers regarding their projects and more submittals are anticipated.

Walking and biking trails activities completed from April–June 2024

Since Council approved [12 trail grant awards for \\$19.5 million](#) across the region, the team has finalized seven intergovernmental agreements of the twelve project awards, which will allow project work to advance and submittal of reimbursement requests.

Take care of Metro parks activities completed from April–June 2024

Progress continues on the health, safety and accessibility improvements at sites in Metro's portfolio including Blue Lake and Oxbow Regional Parks and on plans for the Lone Fir Cultural Heritage and Healing Garden.

Blue Lake Regional Park opened for Memorial Day weekend after a nine-month closure to update the beloved park's water and sewer systems just in time to accommodate the summer season. As a result of the improvements, park visitors are able to launch paddleboards, canoes and other small, nonmotorized watercraft onto Blue Lake.

See more detail on the status of all bond funded take care of Metro parks projects in the [appendix](#).

Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants activities completed from April–June 2024

In early July, the Metro Council approved a slate of On July 11, the Metro Council approved \$2.5 million in grant awards for the second round of the Nature in Neighborhoods grants funded by the parks and nature bond. This capital grants program has helped bring to life some of our favorite places across the region—from Cully Park in NE Portland to Nadaka Nature Park in Gresham to Bull Mountain Park in Tigard to the John Inskeep Environmental Learning Center at Clackamas Community College. These grants have also supported the restoration and management of hundreds of acres of Oregon ash forested habitat to

alleviate the imminent negative impacts of the emerald ash borer at Jackson Bottom wetlands in Hillsboro and funded a Depave project in inner SE and a stormwater project at Mt. Hood Community College.

[Community Choice grants](#) activities completed from April–June 2024

After the Metro Council approved over \$2 million in grant awards funding to 15 projects in western Washington County that were identified and shaped by the community, the team is working with park providers to develop scopes of work for each of the projects. The team is also having conversations with partners, park providers and community and conservation organizations about launching a second round of community choice grants in 2025.

[Large scale community visions](#) activities completed from April–June 2024

Solicitation for up to \$10 million in funding kicked off in April 2024. To generate interest about the funding opportunity, the program team hosted an in person and virtual open house in early April.

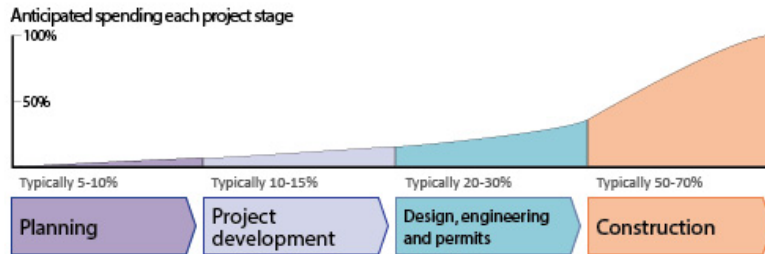
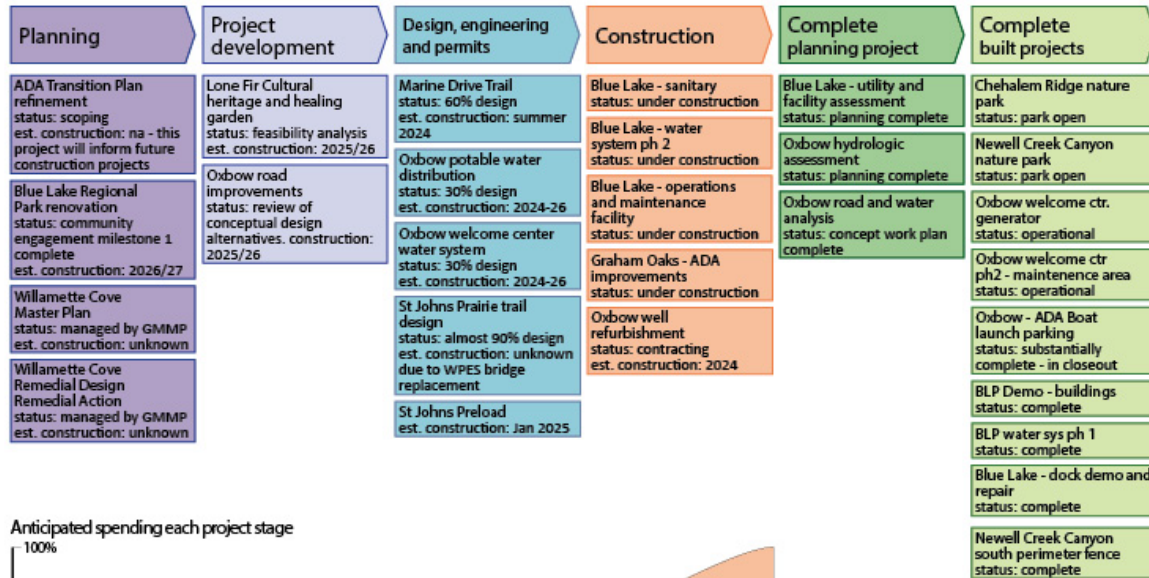
The solicitation for the large scale community visions program is open, with the team actively soliciting letters of interest and helping partners understand how and when to submit them. To date, the team has received five letters of interest. Staff are currently working with the three entities designated by the Metro Council [as pilot round large scale community visions projects](#) to ensure readiness to finalize eventual funding awards.

Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2024)

Status of bond funded Metro parks capital projects (take care of Metro parks program)

Take care of Metro parks projects

Project status July 2024



FY24 Q4
Projects are fully or partially funded by 2019 bond.

Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2024)

List of capital restoration planned to be funded by the 2019 parks and nature bond, Summer 2024

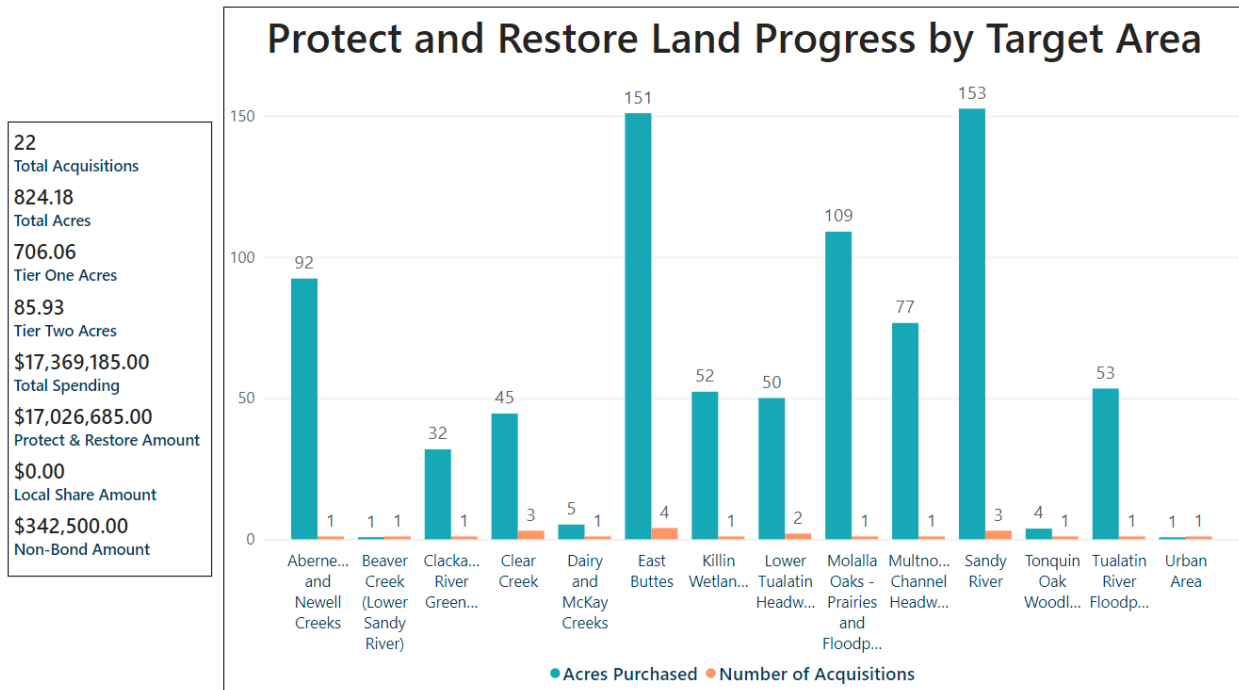
- *Project prioritized based on feedback received from community, partners and stakeholders during bond development (pre-2019) and bond refinement (post-2020)*
- *Future fiscal years will likely identify additional capital restoration projects to be funded by the 2019 parks and nature bond*

Project name	Description	Anticipated timing of project construction
Roberts Bridge Stream Restoration	The project is located at the Upper Johnson Creek Natural Area in Gresham, Oregon. Goals include the removal of a one-lane vehicular bridge over Johnson Creek paved asphalt driveways, including road fill and base gravel, concrete, and other debris. Restoration actions include the installation of large wood into the stream and floodplain and placement of boulders in-stream. Outcomes will include enhanced water quality, fish habitat and floodplain connectivity.	2024
Beaver Creek Stream Restoration	The project is at the South Beaver Creek Natural Area on Beaver Creek in Troutdale. Restoration includes actions that benefit water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife. This project is being developed to support broader native fish recovery efforts by the Beaver Creek and Sandy River Partnerships. These restoration actions were identified in 2015 during a feasibility study of potential projects on Metro lands along lower Beaver Creek. Restoration work includes removal of an instream weir (small dam), placement of large logs by helicopter, removal of debris from the stream, and stabilizing a stormwater outfall.	2024
Coffee Lake Wetlands Restoration	A large and highly visible wetland restoration project at the Coffee Lake Creek Wetlands Natural Area in Wilsonville. The project will improve wildlife habitat, water quality, floodplain connectivity by dewatering and re-routing two ditches, filling the ditches, grading, and lowering a large central wetland, excavating ponds of varying depths with shallow connector swales, utilizing fill to create hummocks, installation of wood features, and re-wetting the restored wetland, across 31.5 acres.	2024
Quamash Prairie McFee Creek Crossing	This project is located at the Quamash Prairie Natural Area in Washington County. The project will replace a failed culvert structure with a new structure that minimizes impact to riparian and aquatic natural resources. Project will ensure continued safe access for the Indigenous Community and Metro staff to the site.	2025
North Fork Deep Creek Restoration	The project is located at the North Fork Deep Creek Natural Area on Deep Creek and North Fork Deep Creek in Boring. Restoration work includes actions that benefit water quality, fish habitat, and wildlife. The project is being developed to support broader native fish recovery efforts by the Clackamas River Partnership. Work includes placement of large logs and brush into the stream by helicopter.	2026

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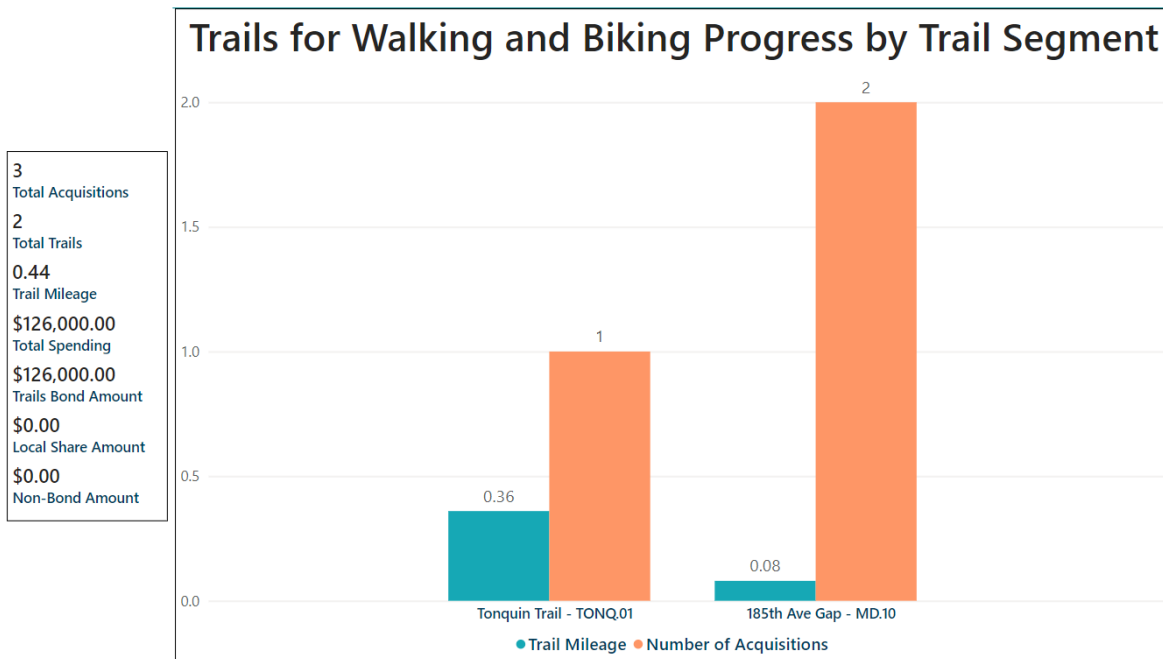
Acquisitions to date by target area and trail segment

Through the policy established in the [2019 parks and nature bond measure](#) and the [target area refinement plans](#) the Metro Council has directed staff to acquire properties in 24 regional target areas and 39 trail corridors that meet the refinement plan goals. Each property varies in size and other features.



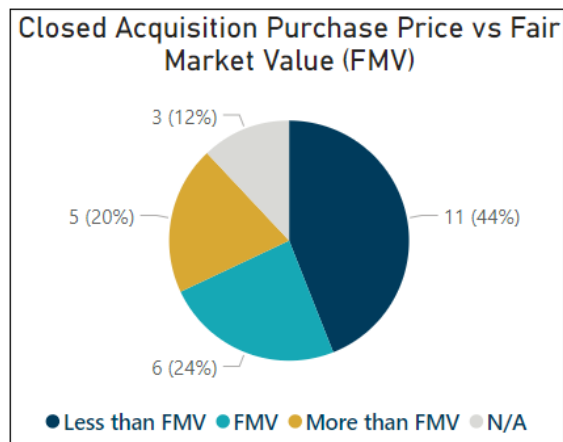
The first chart displays the both the number of properties purchased and acres protected in each target area through the Protect and Restore Land program over the lifetime of the 2019 bond. The second chart displays both the number of trail properties purchased and mileage in each trail corridor. Through June 30, 2024, Metro staff have acquired 22 properties totaling 824.2 acres across 14 target areas, along with 3 trail acquisitions. This number will expand over time as more properties are purchased across all target areas and trail corridors.

Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2024)



Purchase price vs. market value

Most properties purchased to date were at or under fair market value, or an appraisal was not required (i.e., the purchase price was less than \$50,000). This includes all purchases funded through the Protect and Restore Land as well as Create Trails for Walking and Biking programs. The Metro Council may direct staff to purchase property at any price, but through the policy established in the Natural Areas Work Plan, the Metro Council has delegated authority to staff to acquire properties for fair market value as

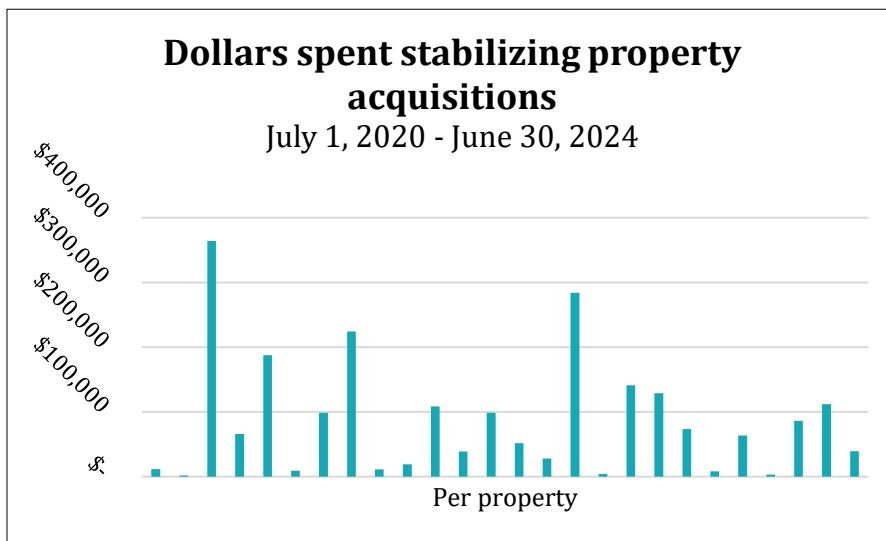


supported by an independent appraisal (with the exception of properties purchased for less than \$50,000, which do not require an appraisal). The Chief Operating Officer may purchase a property for up to \$100,000 or 10% more than the value established by an appraisal provided certain conditions are met. The executive steering committee has recommended that staff bring more negotiations to the COO to consider a purchase price within \$100,000 or 10% of the appraised value, so the percentage of properties purchased above FMV is expected to grow over time.

Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2024)

Cost of stabilization to date

Stabilization is one of the four program activities eligible for Protect and Restore Land funds. Stabilization is the phase of management that follows acquisition. During stabilization Metro uses bond funds to address threats that would otherwise compromise the values for which a new natural area is acquired. As no two properties are the same, or have the same conditions present, stabilization plans and costs will vary by property and the conditions present. Metro uses a function-based approach to identify and implement stabilization activities appropriate to each site. Function-based stabilization focuses on actions that protect high ecological function and shift currently degrading conditions to a positive trend leading to Metro to meeting the conservation objectives for which the property was purchased. Common stabilization actions include natural resource enhancement and property



management and security actions. Important ecological functions addressed include key features such as soil erosion control, habitat quality and trend, temperature and flow modification of streams, and public safety.

Progress on climate resiliency

The 2019 bond measure prioritizes increasing the climate resilience of greater

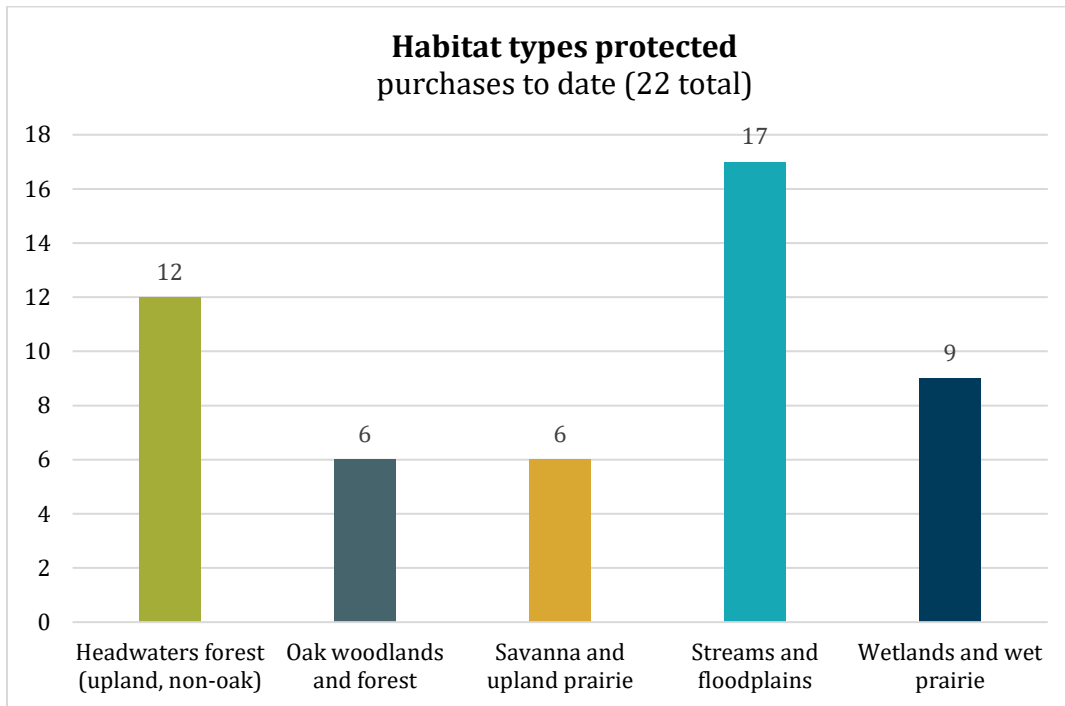
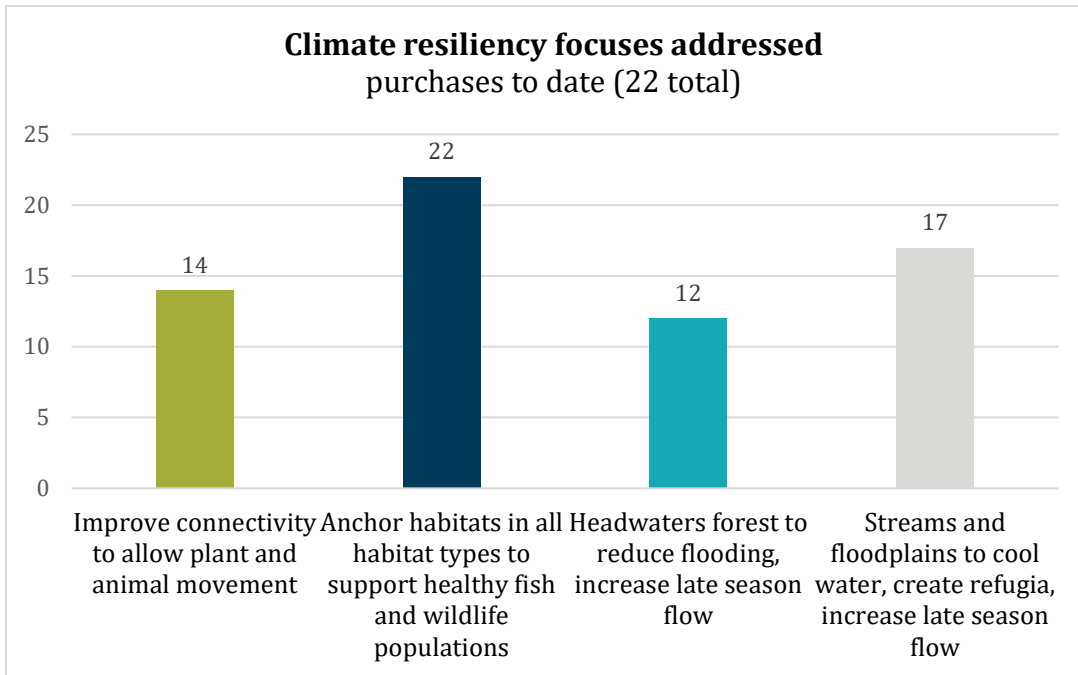
Portland’s natural systems. Climate resilience refers to the ability of a system to withstand or recover from changes induced by a changing climate. The overarching strategies for increasing the resilience of natural areas and natural systems to climate-caused stresses are:

- Creating and managing large, healthy anchor habitat sites in all habitat types to support robust plant and animal populations.
- Improving overall habitat connectivity to allow plants and animals to move in response to changing conditions.
- Improving the ability of streams to absorb and store high flows and provide cold-water refugia by protecting, connecting, and restoring headwaters, wetlands, riparian areas, floodplains and stream habitats.

The charts below display how many properties purchased satisfied criteria aligned with these strategies in five primary habitat types. A property could have one or more features and/or habitat types present and may be represented multiple times.

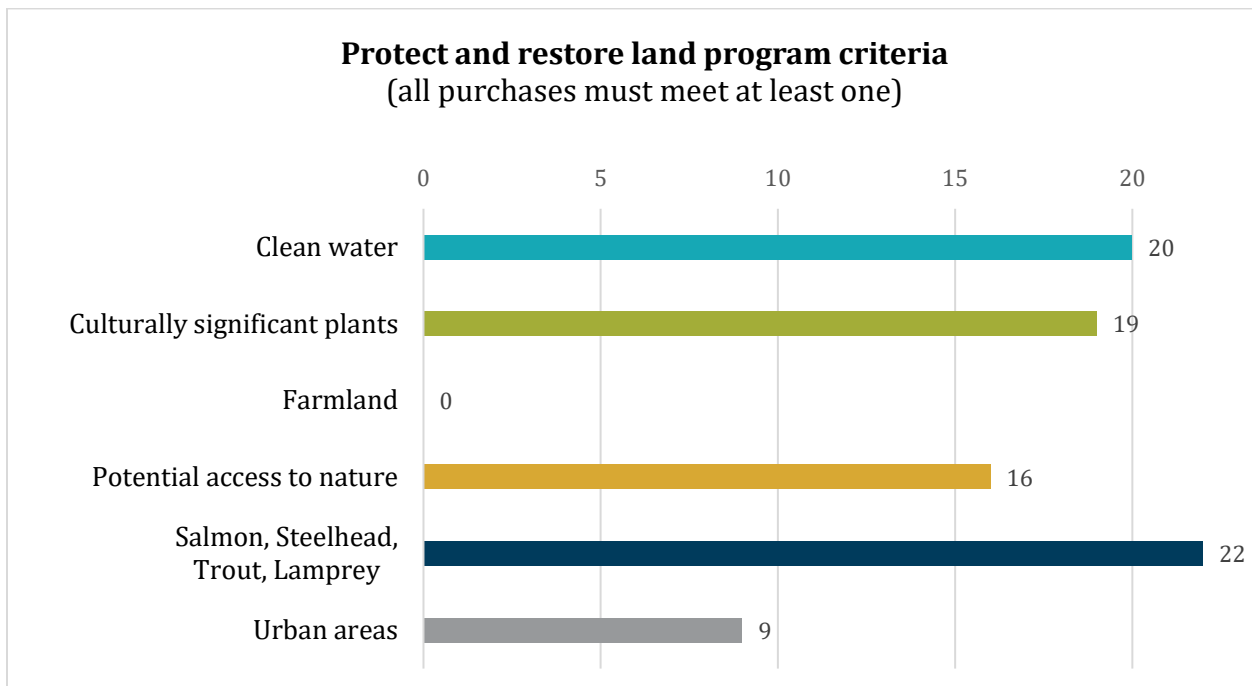
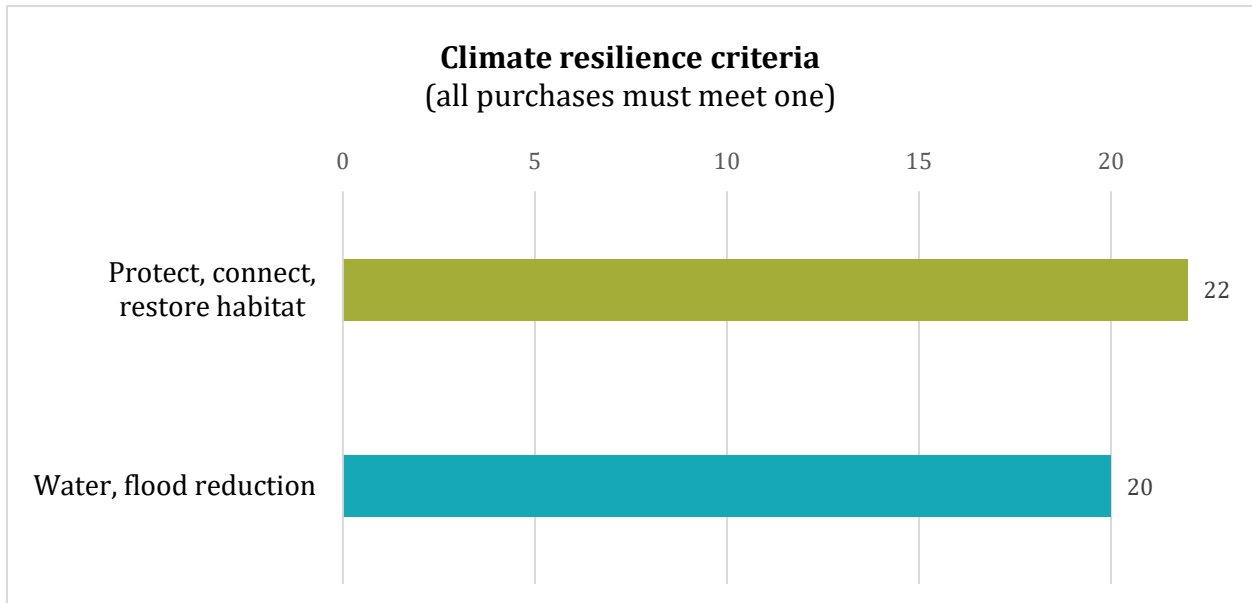


Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2024)



In addition to this more detailed analysis, the bond measure includes a specific requirement that all purchases funded by the bond must satisfy at least one climate resiliency criterion listed in the bond measure. The two criterion that can be satisfied by property protection alone are shown in the chart below, along with the number of purchases that meet the criteria.

Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2024)



Protect and Restore Land supplemental information, covering investments to date (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2024)

Constraints

As expected, the team met acquisition goals for FY24 in terms of transactions and dollars spent. We are seeing the groundwork laid over the past months and year from outreach transition into negotiations and closed transactions. Capacity is growing with three senior real estate specialists on the team. The third started in May and onboarding is moving swiftly; he is already working on transactions.

The market continues to be dynamic and challenging for off market transactions. The largest challenges in the market are still related to timelines and seller expectations of value – but Metro real estate staff are now also seeing impacts of low inventory and high interest rates on willing seller cultivation, i.e., the desire for people to sell their property and move. To overcome this barrier the real estate team is utilizing tools such as land use actions to purchase portions of property with conservation values while sellers retain ownership of portions with homes and other structures. However, land use actions add 4–6 months onto a transaction timeline.

The team, working with the parks and trails planning team at Metro, continue to build relationships with local agency partners to better facilitate partnership and real estate transactions in the urban target area and regional trail network. In March, the Metro Council formally stated they support staff contributing to real estate transactions led by partners when the project also met Metro’s goals (previously, Metro was required to lead the negotiation). This removed another barrier; however, barriers remain:

- Metro must be willing to work on the partner’s timeline and within their capacity to complete these purchases; these timelines can vary.
- Specific to trail gap acquisition – a certain amount of planning is required to be complete prior to engaging landowners to articulate where the trail alignment is expected to go, so the team knows which landowner to engage with and roughly the required shape and size of easement. The Parks and Nature planning team is working through some of these design challenges, but many trail gaps require more work to be done on alignment. Some partners, such as the city of Hillsboro, have hired consultants to assist with this work which has been very successful. Other partners have less capacity to engage or are unable to prioritize this work.

Parks and Nature bond financial reporting through June 2024

2019 Parks and Nature Bond - spend in millions							
		FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	Total Bond Spend
Protect/Restore (\$155 M)							
	Personnel	0.0	1.0	1.3	1.8	2.2	
	M&S & Capital	0.1	0.8	5.1	5.3	8.2	
	TOTAL	0.1	1.9	6.4	7.1	10.4	\$ 25.9
Take Care of Metro Parks (\$98 M)							
	Personnel	0.0	0.6	1.3	2.0	1.3	
	M&S/Capital/ Transfer	0.2	3.1	2.3	2.0	16.3	
	TOTAL	0.2	3.7	3.6	4.0	17.6	\$ 29.2
Local Share (\$92 M)							
	Personnel	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	
	M&S & Capital	-	0.0	2.5	1.6	3.7	
	TOTAL	0.0	0.2	2.7	1.9	4.0	\$ 8.79
Trails (\$40 M)							
	Personnel	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	
	M&S & Capital	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	
	TOTAL	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	\$ 1.3
Nature in Neighborhood grants (\$40 M)							
	Personnel	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	
	M&S & Capital	-	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.5	
	TOTAL	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.4	1.0	\$ 1.9
Community Visions (\$50 M)							
	Personnel	-	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	
	M&S & Capital	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	
	TOTAL	-	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	\$ 0.3
Administrative							
	<i>Tax-exempt</i>	\$ 0.5	\$ 1.5	\$ 3.5	\$ 3.6	\$ 3.1	
	<i>Taxable</i>	\$ 0.3	\$ -	\$ 0.5	\$ 0.5	\$ 0.2	
	TOTAL	\$ 0.8	\$ 1.5	\$ 4.0	\$ 4.1	\$ 3.3	\$ 13.8
	Admin % by Year	66.2%	20.2%	23.0%	22.8%	8.8%	
	ACCUMULATED Admin % (over the life of the bond)	66.2%	26.5%	24.2%	23.6%	17.0%	
Total bond spend		\$ 1.2	\$ 7.8	\$ 17.7	\$ 17.8	\$ 36.5	

