

# Fall 2024 Parks and Nature quarterly update

Covering bond activities and investments from July–September 2024



## BOND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMPLETED:

July–September 2024

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

- The [Blue Lake Park renovation project](#) completed its second major engagement milestone to help narrow down the plans to a single preferred design, which included focused workshops on the three designs with over 90 BIPOC community members and members of the accessibility community, as well as a self-guided open house and a survey that received over 130 responses.
- A second round of engagement is underway for the [Willamette Cove](#) master plan process including an online survey open through early November and a series of online focus groups.
- The protect and restore team had 18 conversations with 10 park providers about potential acquisitions.
- Metro staff is having conversations with partners in a subset of District 2 whose

population and geography aligns with the overall bond and program criteria (North Clackamas Parks and Recreation, Milwaukie, Gladstone and Oregon City).

## BOND REPORTING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES COMPLETED:

July–September 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 mirrors the [video explainer update](#) that staff shared with the oversight committee in spring 2024.

## BOND ACTIVITIES AND INVESTMENTS COMPLETED:

July–September 2024

**Protect and restore land activities from July-September 2024**

## [oregonmetro.gov/protect-and-restore-land](https://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. As of end of September, the team completed an acquisition of 60 acres in the Multnomah Channel Headwaters target area, which brings a total of 27 purchases, totaling 888 acres across 15 target areas.

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

## **Local share activities completed from July–September 2024**

[oregonmetro.gov/localshare](https://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, the team has received two submittals—one from the City of Wood Village for the Wood Village Restoration project as well as a

submission from the City of Gladstone. In addition, the team completed IGAs with Milwaukie, and Clackamas County for priority projects that have already been submitted.

To date, the bond's local share program has awarded \$31 million to 19 projects across 11 park providers.

### **Walking and biking trails activities completed from July–September 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. Two additional contracts are close to being finalized.

### **Take care of Metro parks activities completed from July–September 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](#).

In addition, The team continues to engage with community members across the region to help shape bond funded planning and improvements at Metro's developed sites. As of September 2024, the Blue Lake Park team completed its second major engagement milestone to help narrow down the plans to a single preferred design, which included focused workshops

on the three designs with over 90 BIPOC community members and members of the accessibility community as well as [self-guided open house](#) and survey that received over 130 responses.

Similarly, a second round of engagement is underway for the Willamette Cove master plan process including an online survey open now through early November and a series of online focus groups that [builds on the feedback](#) we received from community earlier this spring.

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 July–September 2024**

In early July, the [Metro Council approved \\$2.5 million in grant awards](#) for the second round of the Nature in Neighborhoods grants supporting five projects including 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, a retrofit of a over-paved street in Portland's Central Eastside to improve bike and pedestrian safety, manage stormwater and boost tree canopy and a stormwater project at Mt. Hood Community College.

To date, the Nature in Neighborhoods capital grants program has awarded \$5.2 million to 12 projects through two grant solicitations. The capital grants team is preparing for a third

solicitation for grant submittals in January 2025.

### **[Community Choice grants](#) activities completed from July–September 2024**

After the [Metro Council approved over \\$2 million in grant awards](#) 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 in a section of District 2 about launching a second round of community choice grants in 2025.

### **[Large scale community visions](#) activities completed from July–September 2024**

Solicitation for up to \$10 million is open on a rolling basis, with the team actively soliciting letters of interest and helping partners understand how and when to submit them.

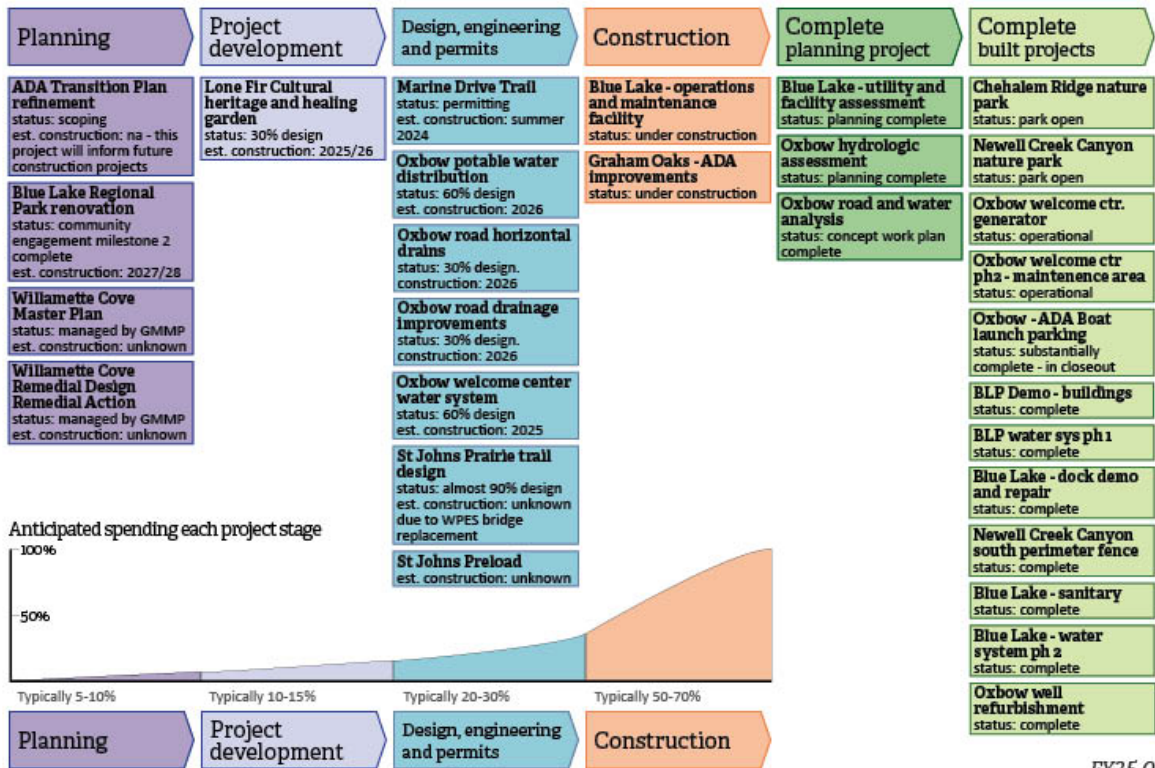
As of September 2024, the team reviewed five letters of interest, invited three to submit full applications, [updated Council on the applications received](#) and is preparing for a Council award by the end of 2024.

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.

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

### Take care of Metro parks projects

Project status September 2024



FY25 Q1

Projects are fully or partially funded by 2019 bond.

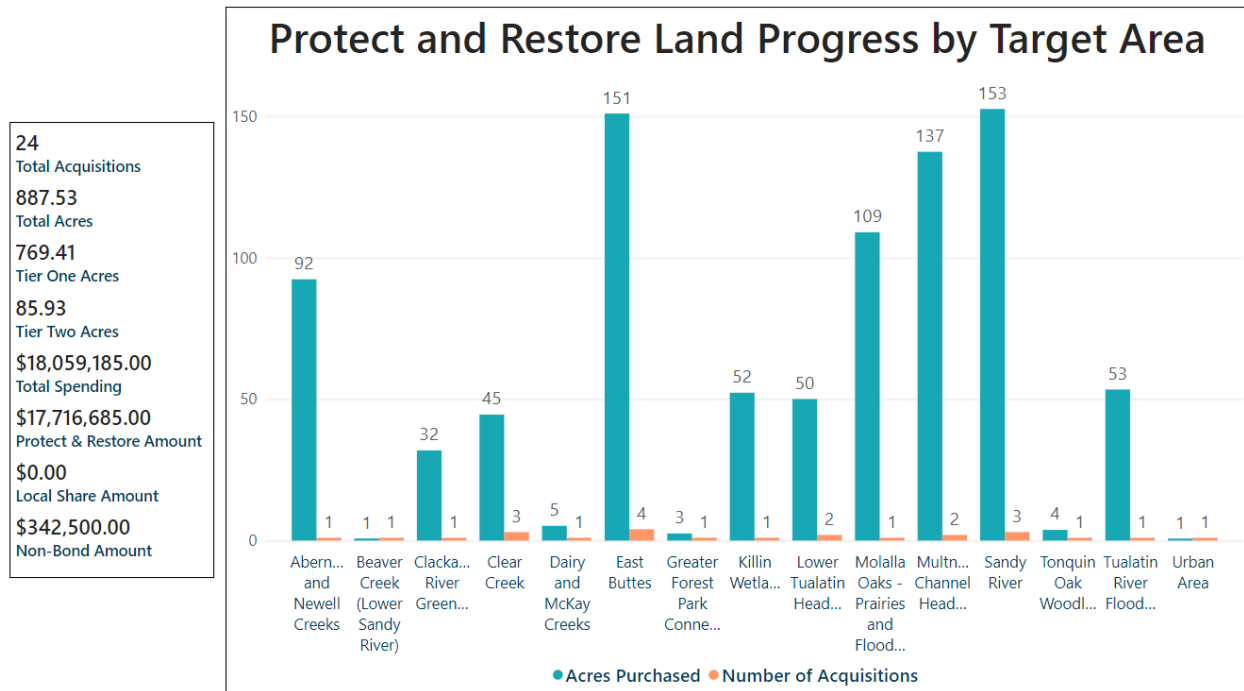
**List of capital restoration planned to be funded by the 2019 parks and nature bond as of summer 2024**

- *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*

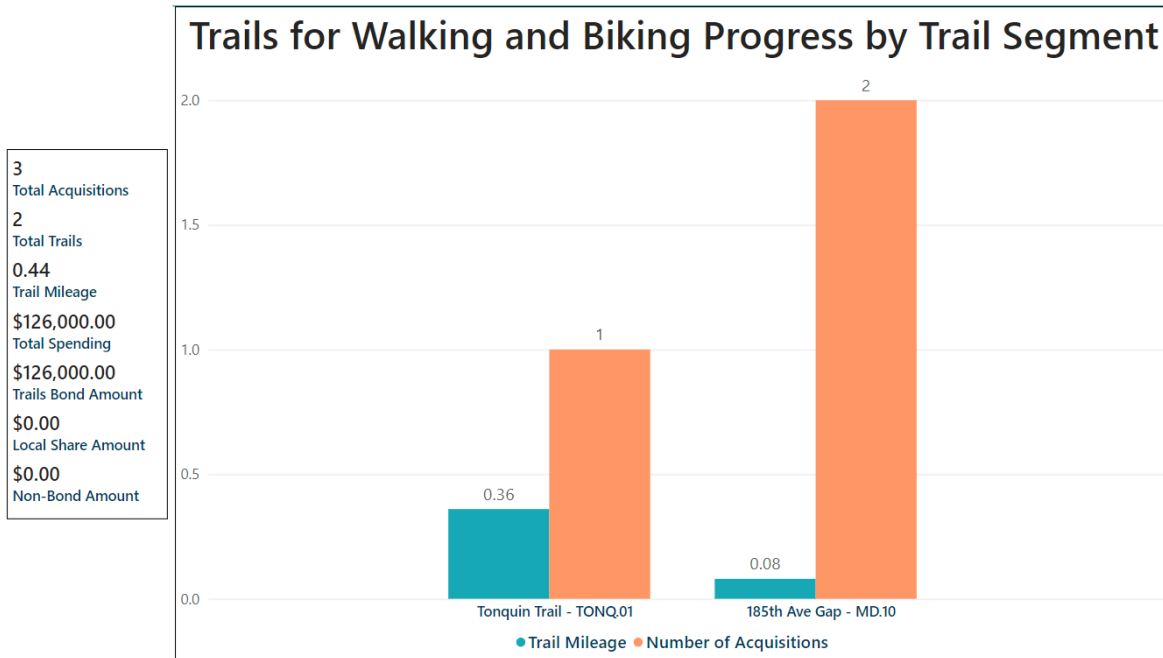
<b>Project name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Anticipated timing of project construction</b>
<b>Roberts Bridge Stream Restoration</b>	The project is located at the Upper Johnson Creek Natural Area in Gresham, Oregon. Goals include the removal of a one-lane vehicular bridge over Johnson Creek paved asphalt 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
<b>Beaver Creek Stream Restoration</b>	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
<b>Coffee Lake Wetlands Restoration</b>	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
<b>Quamash Prairie McFee Creek Crossing</b>	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
<b>North Fork Deep Creek Restoration</b>	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

## 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.

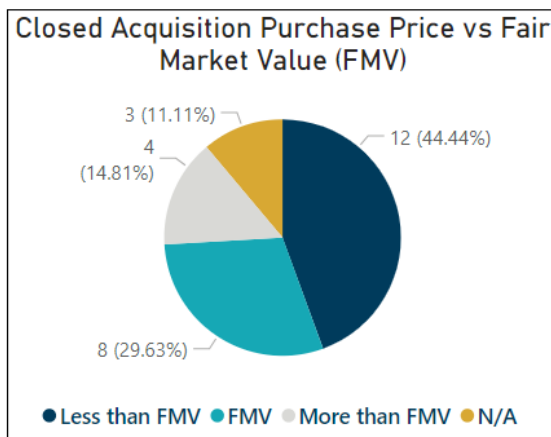


The first chart displays the both the number of properties purchased and acres protected in each target area through the protect and restore land program over the lifetime of the 2019 bond. The second chart displays both the number of trail properties purchased and mileage in each trail corridor. Through September 30, 2024, Metro staff have acquired 24 properties totaling 887.53 acres across 15 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.



## 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

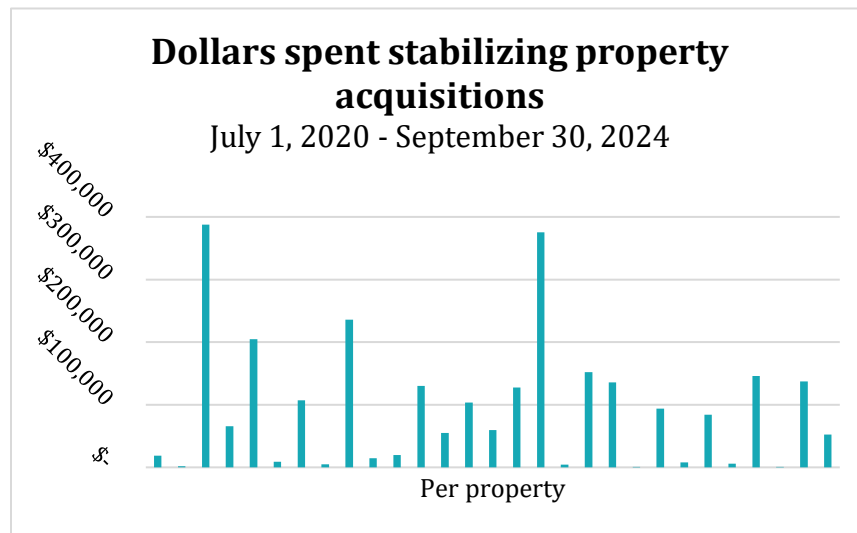


supported by an independent appraisal (with the exception of properties purchased for less than \$50,000, which do not require an appraisal). The Chief Operating Officer may purchase a property for up to \$100,000 or 10% more than the value established by an appraisal provided certain conditions are 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.

## 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.

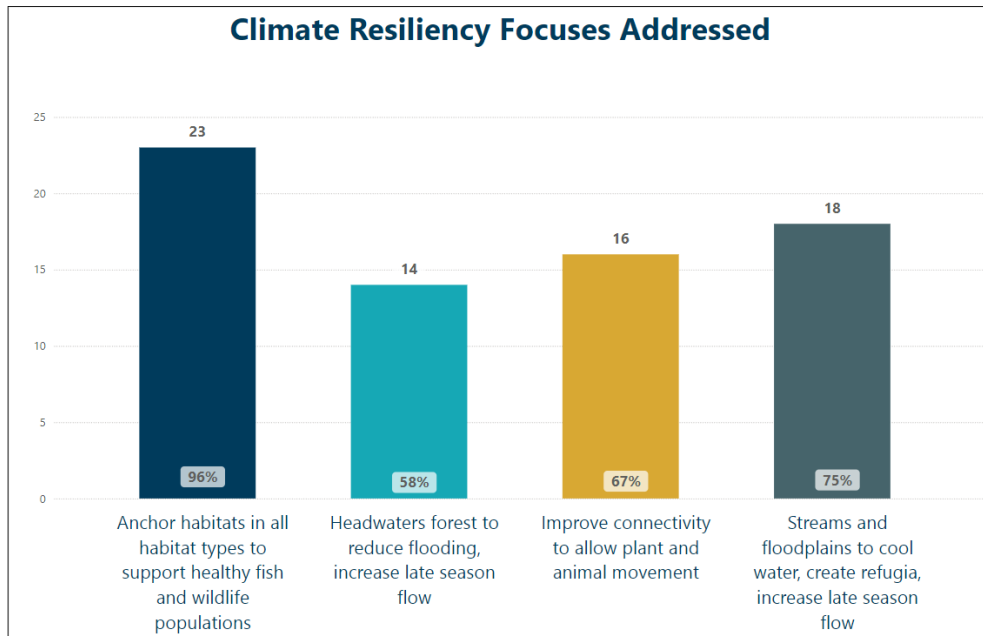
Climate resilience refers to the ability of a system to withstand or recover from changes induced by a changing climate. The overarching strategies for increasing the resilience of natural areas and natural systems to climate-caused stresses are:

- 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.

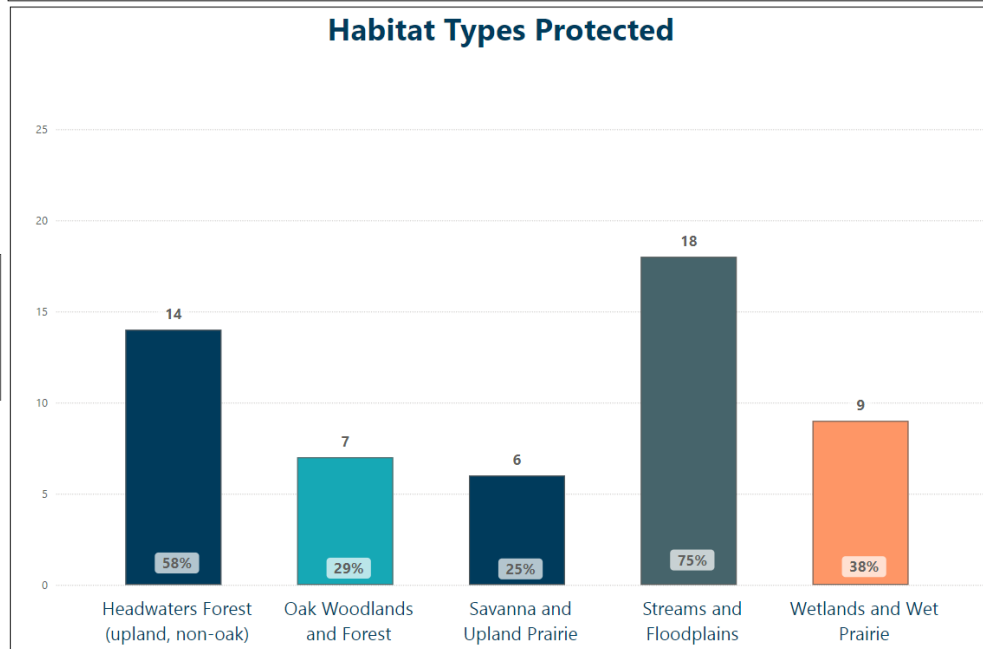
The charts below display how many properties purchased satisfied criteria aligned with these strategies in five primary habitat types.

A property could have one or more features and/or habitat types present and may be represented multiple times within the same chart.

Total Number of Acquisitions  
**24**

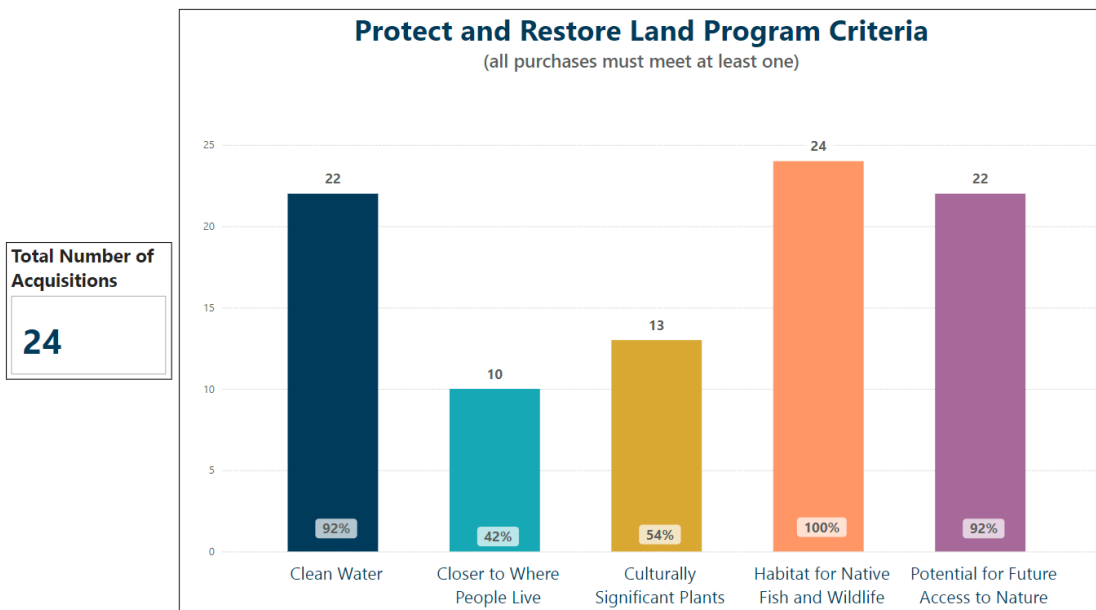
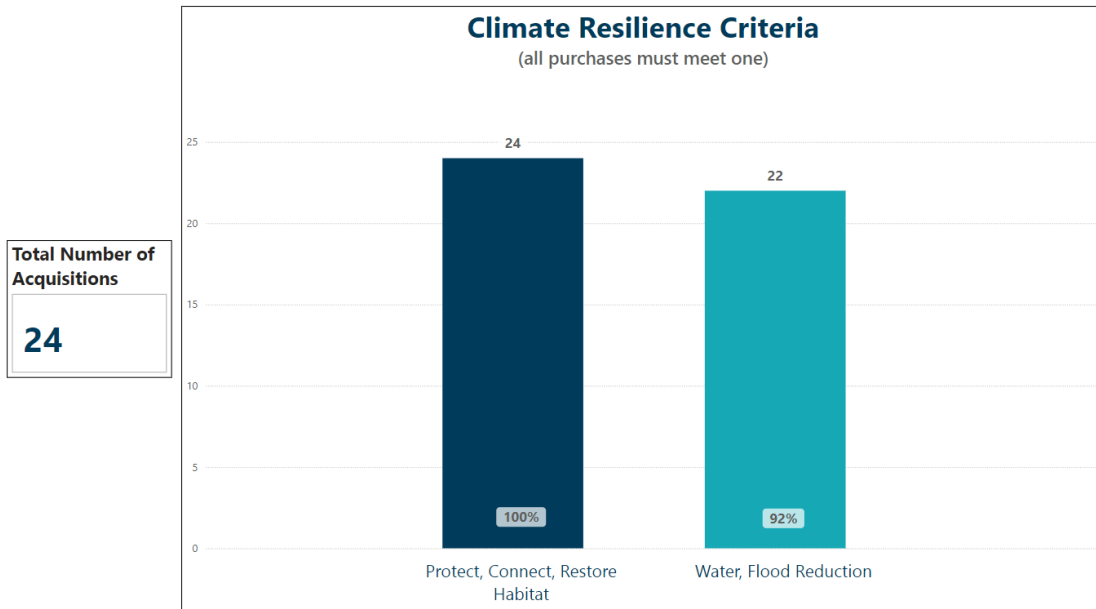


Total Number of Acquisitions  
**24**





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 resilience 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.



## Constraints

The team is tracking to meet acquisition goals for FY25. We continue to see the groundwork laid over the past months and year from outreach transition into negotiations and closed transactions. At the end of calendar year 2023, bond leadership and Metro’s executive stewardship committee signed off on a spending trajectory that sees the bond funds spent by the end of FY31. The acquisition program is grateful to have clarity around funding availability and budget and is on pace to meet these goals each year. Because the team is successful in meeting its goals, I would not describe the following market forces as “constraints”, but market factors to be aware of and work within.

- 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 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. Land use actions add 4-6 months onto a transaction timeline.

The team, working with the Parks and Nature 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 2024, 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 September 2024

**2019 Parks and Nature Bond - Forecast *in millions***  
as of September 2024 (FY 2025 Quarter 1)

	Actuals FY20	Actuals FY21	Actuals FY22	Actuals FY23	Actuals FY24	Act Q1 FY25	Total Bond Spend
<b>Protect/Restore</b>	155.0						
Personnel	0.0	1.0	1.3	1.8	2.2	0.7	7.0
M&S & Capital	0.1	0.8	5.1	5.3	8.2	2.5	22.1
<i>Admin Cost Allocation</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>2.2</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>6.7</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>\$ 35.8</b>
<b>Take Care of Metro Parks</b>	98.0						
Personnel	0.0	0.6	1.3	2.0	1.3	0.3	5.6
M&S/Capital/Transfer	0.2	3.1	2.3	2.0	16.3	1.6	25.4
<i>Admin Cost Allocation</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>1.2</i>	<i>1.3</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>6.0</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>\$ 37.0</b>
<b>Local Share</b>	92.0						
Personnel	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	1.1
M&S & Capital	-	0.0	2.5	1.6	3.7	-	7.8
<i>Admin Cost Allocation</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>\$ 8.9</b>
<b>Trails</b>	40.0						
Personnel	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	1.2
M&S & Capital	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.6
<i>Admin Cost Allocation</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.4</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>\$ 2.2</b>
<b>Grants</b>	40.0						
Personnel	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.6
M&S & Capital	-	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.5	1.2
<i>Admin Cost Allocation</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>1.3</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>\$ 4.2</b>
<b>Community Visions</b>	50.0						
Personnel	-	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.3
M&S & Capital	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Admin Cost Allocation</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.2</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>\$ 0.5</b>
<b>Total Spend</b>	\$ 1.2	\$ 7.8	\$ 17.7	\$ 17.8	\$ 36.7	\$ 7.5	\$ 88.7
<b>Total Admin</b>	0.8	1.6	4.1	4.1	3.3	0.9	14.7
<b>Admin% of Total</b>	66%	20%	23%	23%	9%	12%	17%

