

# Summary of Public Responses to the Natural Areas, Trails and Westside Wildlife Corridor Questionnaire

### **Background:**

In November 2006, voters in the Portland area passed a \$227.4 million bond measure devoted to acquiring natural areas throughout the region for protecting wildlife habitat, preserving water quality, and enhancing public access to nature. It included allocations to local governments for acquisition of natural areas and parks and projects related to public access to nature.

Portland's local share allocation is \$15.2 million. Portland's share will be focused primarily on natural area acquisitions, with smaller allocations for neighborhood park acquisition in park deficient neighborhoods, trail corridor acquisition, and restoration projects. Acquisitions for natural areas and trails are being coordinated with Metro in order to complement regional projects.

At a series of public meetings hosted by Metro in June 2007, Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) sought feedback on the public's priorities on criteria for use in selecting properties to acquire. People were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on the web. What follows are the results of the limited feedback received, and comments offered. In some cases specific properties were recommended for consideration. PP&R will follow up on these recommendations.

Over 500 people attended the Metro meetings across the region, including areas beyond the City of Portland. Attendees interested in acquisitions in Portland were encouraged to use Metro's Target Area questionnaires. In addition PP&R requested input on local share acquisition priorities for natural areas and trails and priorities for protection in the Westside Wildlife Corridor. A total of 30 people responded in writing or on the web to the questions asked specifically by PP&R about the criteria for selection of Natural Areas and Trails, with another 12 responding specifically to questions about the Westside Wildlife Corridor.

### **Natural Area Acquisition Survey Results:**

Natural Area Acquisition will comprise 55% of Portland's Local Share spending (\$8.4 million). Acquisitions will be focused in Metro's regional target areas within the City of Portland (Columbia Slough, Forest Park Connections, Johnson Creek, Tryon Creek, Fanno Creek and Willamette River Greenway) and in one local target area (Westside Wildlife Corridor). Trail Corridor acquisitions will comprise another 8% (\$1.25 million), focused on regional trails.

There were four overall criteria for natural area acquisition, as detailed in the *Natural Areas Acquisition Strategy (November 2006)*. These are:

- Protecting large, intact areas
- Protecting sites with exceptional biodiversity values (habitats and species)
- Improving connectivity within a regional system of natural areas
- Buffering current natural areas

People were provided the above information about pre-existing criteria and then asked to rank others. Their responses are listed below in rank order.

### Which of the additional criteria should be emphasized in Portland's local share spending on natural areas?

Criteria (ranked in order of highest priority, based on public feedback on score of 1-5, with 1 as highest priority)	Rating average	Response count
Protecting land threatened by imminent development	2.15	26
Preserving remaining high-quality wildlife habitat	2.33	27
Protecting headwater areas for water quality benefits	2.59	27
Protecting fish and aquatic habitats including land along streams	3.00	26
Providing public access and wildlife watching opportunities	3.81	27

When asked what additional priorities people might add, they offered the following suggestions, as well as particular properties that PP&R should look into. PP&R will follow up on property suggestions. The general priorities suggested were:

- Multi-use, leverage other \$ in community
- Those about cover it except providing REAL natural areas nearby for all (especially where there are lots of kids...which may be everywhere, but...)
- Connecting open space
- Yes an additional concern to me is lighting that is focused up and blocks the view of the night sky. The National Dark Sky association has information on outdoor lighting that provides safety, saves electricity and does not obliterate our view of the stars.
- Please save our salmon and pilliated woodpeckers!

### **Trail Acquisition Survey Results:**

Acquisition is a top priority of the *Regional Trails Strategy: A 20-Year Vision for Portland's Regional Trail System (June 2006)*. Acquisitions will be guided by the following priorities, which are also applied to design and construction projects.

- Connects long length of trail
- Completes loops
- Has outstanding scenic quality
- Connects to park/natural area destinations
- Serves higher number of potential users

Beyond this information about pre-existing criteria people were asked to prioritize the following new criteria. Their responses are listed below in rank order.

## Which of these additional criteria should be emphasized in Portland's local share spending on trail acquisition?

Criteria	Rating	Response
(ranked in order of highest priority, based on public	average	count
feedback on score of 1-7, with 1 as highest priority)		
Completing gaps in existing trails (e.g. Willamette Greenway in SW,	1.80	20
Springwater Corridor, Marine Drive Trail)		
Providing neighborhood connections to existing trails	3.29	20
Providing safe routes to schools, parks, natural areas and community	3.70	18
centers		
Providing recreational benefits such as relaxation, exercise, scenic	3.80	19
enjoyment		
Providing new trailheads along existing trails	4.42	21
Geographic balance (start regional trails throughout the city, rather	4.61	19
than trying to complete those started)		
Providing transportation between residential and employment areas	4.74	20

When asked what additional priorities people might add to this list, they offered the following suggestions, as well as particular properties that PP&R should look into. PP&R will follow up on property suggestions. The general priorities suggested were:

- Leverage other \$ in community.
- Gaps Lampros Street/Swan Island Lagoon. Provide neighborhood connections to existing trails to Swan Island.
- Provide new trails to bypass areas where foot and bike travel is currently difficult.
- Connectivity is very important to existing trails and neighborhoods.

### **Westside Wildlife Corridor Survey Results:**

The Westside Wildlife Corridor is the forested spine of the west hills that provides the green backdrop to downtown Portland. This local target area will help protect remaining natural habitat and create a continuous corridor from Forest Park south along the west hills. People were asked to prioritize the following selection criteria. The results are listed in rank order.

Priority	Rating	Response
(ranked in order of highest priority, based on public	average	count
feedback on score of 1-5, with 1 as highest priority)		
Filling in gaps within existing protected areas	2.09	11
Linking to Washington/Forest Park and Tryon Creek natural areas	2.50	10
Buffering existing natural areas	2.80	10
Maintaining a green backdrop to downtown Portland	3.30	10
Providing neighborhood access to trails	4.20	10

When asked what additional priorities people might add to this list, they offered the following suggestions, as well as particular properties that PP&R should look into. PP&R will follow up on property suggestions. The general priorities suggested were:

- Creating a wildlife corridor, connecting the Coast Range to Forest Park to Tryon
- Consideration of bike/pedestrian commuter needs will help Portland thrive in the postpetroleum economy
- Properties in danger of immediate development
- All areas need to be linked to provide local access to all areas from neighborhood trails
- Provide support for controlling invasive weeds.

PP&R also sought suggestions about particular partnerships that should be pursued to support the acquisition of lands. The following suggestions were provided.

- Friends of Tryon, Marquam, Fanno, Hoyt, Forest park. Neighborhood Associations. Local businesses
- Partner with Soil and Water Conservation Districts to encourage good stewardship of private lands
- Portland United Mountain Pedalers (PUMP) and Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA)
- Swap with Portland Development Commission
- Work with VA Hospital to ensure they preserve forested land they own between Terwilliger Parkway and existing hospital structures