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191264

Ordinance

Reauthorize intergovernmental agreements and grant agreements in support of the Neighborhood to the River Program for five years beginning FY 2023-24 up to \$100,000 per fiscal year with aggregate cost not to exceed \$500,000

Passed

The City of Portland ordains:

Section 1. The Council finds:

1. The Neighborhood to the River (N2R) Program, modeled after the Bureau of Environmental Services' successful Tabor to the River Program, integrates engineered pipe solutions, green infrastructure, community projects, and education to facilitate effective capital project delivery. On July 22, 2009, the Council approved Ordinance No. 183030, which authorized Tabor to the River to implement financial incentives and partnership agreements for stormwater retrofits within the project areas of Tabor to the River.
2. The N2R Program funds community projects within N2R program areas to expand the benefits of CIP projects through community activities such as planting trees and native plants, installing rain gardens, and learning about stormwater management and watershed health. Current program areas include: Columbia Corridor, Alder, Boise-Eliot, Stephens Creek, and Tanner.
3. On June 27th, 2018, the Council approved Ordinance No. 189052, which authorized the N2R Program to fund \$26,930 in grant agreements and Native Plant Certificates. On July 30, 2019, the Council approved Ordinance No. 189632, which authorized the N2R Program to fund up to \$100,000 in grant agreements and Native Plant Certificates each year from FY2019-20 through FY2022-23. Continued advancement of the N2R Program will further improvements to city livability and contribute to a prosperous, educated, healthy, and equitable Portland. Although the COVID-19 global pandemic and emergency protocols limited the ability to deliver as many projects as anticipated, \$165,000 were spent, and \$425,000 were leveraged in match, from FY2019-20 through FY2022-23. Relationships developed during this term will facilitate future projects.

Introduced by

[Commissioner Mingus Mapps](#)

Bureau

[Environmental Services](#)

Contact

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Requested Agenda Type

Regular

Date and Time Information

Requested Council Date

May 3, 2023

4. The established cost is up to \$100,000 per fiscal year from FY2023-24 through FY2027-28. Funding for \$100,000 for FY2023-24 has been requested in the Sewer System Operating Fund, ESDP000020, and Bureau of Environmental Services Capital Improvement Program, and additional funds will be requested in the FY2024-25 through FY 2027-28 budgets.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Council directs:

- A. The Director of the Bureau of Environmental Services is authorized to execute grant agreements and intergovernmental agreements for the purpose described in Section 1, in amounts not to exceed \$100,000 per fiscal year from FY2023-24 through FY2027-28.
- B. Amendments to the agreements may be agreed to and executed by the Director of the Bureau of Environmental Services provided the amendments to a particular agreement do not collectively increase the original agreement's amount by more than twenty-five percent.
- C. All agreements authorized by this ordinance are subject to approval as to form by the City Attorney's Office.
- D. The Mayor and City Auditor are hereby authorized to pay for such agreements with funds from the Sewer System Operating Fund, ESDP000020, and Bureau of Environmental Services Capital Improvement Program when demand is presented and approved by the proper authority.

An ordinance when passed by the Council shall be signed by the Auditor. It shall be carefully filed and preserved in the custody of the Auditor (City Charter Chapter 2 Article 1 Section 2-122)

Passed by Council

May 3, 2023

Auditor of the City of Portland

Simone Rede

Impact Statement

Purpose of Proposed Legislation and Background Information

The purpose of this Ordinance is to provide continued funding to community partners to implement on-the-ground restoration and education projects within Neighborhood to the River (N2R) [program areas](#).

Neighborhood to the River is an approach to service delivery that integrates green infrastructure and community engagement elements with capital investments to facilitate effective and efficient system improvements. N2R capital projects address sanitary and stormwater system need with solutions that include surface elements like green street facilities and other vegetation investments. Because the legacies of this work are not entirely underground, we work with local communities in advance of and during capital

construction to help them understand the need for the work and the ways that they can be involved and influence outcomes. The current N2R geographies include neighborhoods in N and NE Portland along the Columbia Corridor, the Boise and Eliot neighborhoods, neighborhoods in SE Portland within the Alder basin, neighborhoods in NW Portland within the Tanner basin, and neighborhoods in SW Portland within the Stephens Creek Subwatershed.

[N2R grants](#) fund community projects that serve community needs while helping the bureau meet goals for stormwater management and watershed health. N2R grant-funded projects must have public visibility and involve community members in project development and delivery. The N2R grant program began in FY2018-19 through the Community Watershed Stewardship Program annual grant Ordinance (Ordinance #189052). The goal of this pilot was to establish a mechanism for delivering vegetation and education investments that centers community vision and reduces administrative burden. In July 2019, Portland City Council granted approval for up to \$100,000 in N2R grants per fiscal year from FY2019-20 through FY2022-23 (Ordinance #189632). It takes time to find potential grantees, build relationships and trust, and support concept development so that projects are ready for implementation. This development work, and the interference caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to in-person activities and resource availability, impacted our ability to invest to the level we had planned. Nevertheless, we invested \$165,000 in community projects and leveraged \$425,000 in match (Table 1). With N2R support, our grantees have hosted 77 planting or education events, planted over 3,000 native plants, and engaged over 250 volunteers. In addition, N2R grantees have the trust and respect of the communities they serve, so they meaningfully extend City services to communities we have difficulty reaching.

Table 1. Partner organizations and projects supported by N2R grant dollars from FY2019-20 through FY2022-23. Note that totals include estimates for FY2022-23.

Partner	Project	Awards	Match	Events	Plants	Volunteers
Columbia Slough Watershed Council	Removing turf grass and planting native plants	\$ 24,147	\$ 21,343	14	2,059	158
Community Members	Planting natives in yards and community spaces	\$ 3,950	15			
Portland Audubon	Green youth leaders in	\$ 43,835	\$ 136,182	11	35	48

	Hacienda communities					
Southeast Uplift	Local artists paint utility boxes	\$ 6,185				
The Blueprint Foundation	Green industry workforce development	\$ 16,605	\$ 206,500			
Verde	Rain gardens and naturescapes with low-income residents	\$ 70,917	\$ 62,380	37	1,089	48
Grand Total	\$ 165,639	\$ 426,405	77	3,183	254	

We focus our relationship-building efforts towards community-based organizations that serve disenfranchised communities within our N2R geographies so that, as we deliver services that improve local stormwater management and watershed health, we also invest in community health, resiliency, and trust building. Re-authorizing the N2R Grant Program will enable us to support current grantees with ongoing projects and prospective grantees whose projects are in development. We have been in dialogue for one or more years with several organizations to help them develop fundable projects. It takes time for community organizations to pull together resources, and often we are working with volunteers who lack the time and technical skills to develop grant proposals and find partners and fiscal agents. This technical assistance is an important part of the services we offer.

The N2R Grant Program meets Bureau and City goals.

- The N2R Grant Program uses a targeted universalism framework to infuse antiracism and equity City Core Values into our processes and services. All of our work relies on collaboration with public, nonprofit, and community partners, and we prize transparency and communication as we provide radical customer service. Fiscal responsibility is also a cornerstone of our program: we invest in projects that return multiple benefits, and to date we have leveraged nearly 3:1 in match for our grant dollars
- The activities funded by N2R grants are part of the public involvement and natural systems investments the City is required to make to

comply with our [MS4 permit](#).

- N2R grants support Environmental Services' mission to manage Portland's wastewater and stormwater infrastructure to protect public health and the environment and vision to preserve and restore the health of Portland's watersheds. We fund community projects that improve local stormwater management, enhance habitat connectivity, and reduce the volume of stormwater entering our combined sewer system.
- The N2R Grants Program supports the bureau's Strategic Plan goals for equitable service delivery; radical customer service; workforce development; and a safe, healthy, respectful, innovative, diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture where City, bureau, and community goals are integrated into all aspects of our work.
- The N2R Grants program supports the equity literacy, equitable service delivery, and workforce equity goals of the BES Equity Plan. Our equity approach, grounded in targeted universalism, challenges program staff to continuously improve their equity literacy so that we can deliver our services equitably. We invest N2R grants and other N2R program resources in workforce development to help provide opportunities for members of disenfranchised communities to develop skills and gain experience needed to work in green industries and potentially pursue City employment.
- The projects funded by N2R grants remove volume from the combined sewer system, improve local stormwater management and increase infiltration, and improve local watershed health and habitat connectivity, contributing to the BES Implementation Priorities across three portfolios: Sanitary & Combined Collection, Stormwater Management, and Restoration & Remediation.

Financial and Budgetary Impacts

- Long-term financial impacts for the City: This item proposes to commit up to \$100,000 per fiscal year, up to \$500,000 in total, to community-centered projects. This amount is within the scope of the past and current budget of the N2R Program.
- Change in expenses: This legislation authorizes spending on an existing project and includes funds that have been budgeted for this intended use.
- The level of confidence for these projects is high. N2R recognizes a high community demand for grant contracts to fund services and materials. In spite of the setbacks we experienced from the COVID-19 global pandemic and emergency response, we have invested considerably in relationship building with prospective grantees, and we are confident that we can help them realize their projects.
- Sources of funding are included in the Sewer System Operating Fund, ESDP000020, and Bureau of Environmental Services Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
- This legislation does not create, eliminate or re-classify positions now or in the future.

- Financial agreements: This legislation does result in a new or modified financial obligation or benefit, in the form of grant agreements and IGAs.

Community Impacts and Community Involvement

The communities within N2R program areas will benefit from this item because the projects it funds are identified and desired by the community. Funding community partners directly allows N2R to better respond to identified community needs, leading to a more effective, equitable, and community-centered program. Benefits for the community include improved watershed health through stormwater management and habitat enhancement, improved conditions for human health from increased access to trees and nature, increased access to environmental education, and increased community agency, particularly for historically and currently disenfranchised communities.

- N2R partners with business and neighborhood associations and coalitions (e.g., Historic Parkrose, Soul District Business Association, Southeast Uplift), educational institutions (e.g., Prescott Elementary, Boise-Eliot Humboldt Elementary), non-profit organizations (e.g., Verde, The Blueprint Foundation, Portland Audubon, Columbia Slough Watershed Council), other Bureaus (e.g., Portland Parks and Recreation, Portland Bureau of Transportation), faith groups (e.g., NW Tibetan Cultural Association, Henjyoji Shingon Buddhist Temple), and community members. Our community partner organizations benefit from financial resources that help fund projects desired by the communities they support, and communities benefit from improvements in their neighborhoods.
- N2R reaches out to disenfranchised communities in Portland (e.g., Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, youth, communities in poverty, and communities living with less shade and more heat, among others) to offer opportunities to improve their neighborhoods with the support of N2R Grant Program resources.
- This legislation makes several improvements to City livability through green infrastructure, community literacy, and workforce development investments focused on disenfranchised communities. In this way, we contribute to a prosperous, educated, healthy, and equitable Portland. N2R uses a targeted universalism approach to equity, recognizing that these universal goals require different approaches and investments depending on how communities are situated.
- There has been wide support and positive feedback from residents and partners for community-based N2R activities. We aim to provide radical customer service. For example, we had to reject a couple of grant requests that did not meet our criteria for community-based projects, did not help to improve stormwater management or watershed health, and/or were inconsistent with our City Core Values. We used these opportunities to help improve our outreach materials so that they better convey program goals and our commitment to City Core Values that underlies all our investments. We also connect folks whose

projects we can't fund with other grant opportunities and partners, and we encourage them to request funds for different work in the future.

- We invited written testimony from all our grantees, and we hope that up to two of our grantees will be available to provide in-person testimony.

100% Renewable Goal

This legislation does not contribute to the City's goal of meeting 100 percent of community-wide energy needs with renewable energy by 2050.

Budget Office Financial Impact Analysis

This ordinance authorizes grants that are built into the BES budget in FY 2023-24 and 10-year forecast as well as the bureau's capital improvement program. The funding comes from the Sewer System Operating Fund, with no General Fund impacts.

Agenda Items

323 Time Certain in [April 26, 2023 Council Agenda](#)

Rescheduled

Rescheduled to April 26, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

336 Regular Agenda in [April 26, 2023 Council Agenda](#)

Passed to second reading

Passed to second reading May 3, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

351 Regular Agenda in [May 3, 2023 Council Agenda](#)

Passed

Commissioner Dan Ryan Yea

Commissioner Rene Gonzalez Yea

Commissioner Mingus Mapps Yea

Commissioner Carmen Rubio Yea

Mayor Ted Wheeler Yea