



YEAR 3

2023–24

PARKS LEVY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



2023–24

PARKS LEVY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The information in this report is accurate as of July 31, 2024.

From the Deputy City Administrator

On July 1, 2024, the City of Portland transitioned into its new organizational structure, uniting the city's parks and recreation, arts, and children's levy programs in the Vibrant Communities Service Area. Together, these services help make Portland a special place to live, work, play, and raise children. As Deputy City Administrator for Vibrant Communities, I'm very proud of the impact our service area has on the community—and proud to share the results of our Parks Local Option Levy (Parks Levy) investments in Year 3.

The Parks Levy allows us to deliver the programs that Portlanders love, keeping parks and facilities clean, safe, and welcoming, and grow and care for Portland's tree canopy and natural areas. In Year 3 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024), the Parks Levy supported free and low-cost summer programs for all Portlanders, including:

- More than 48 Summer Free For All events, movies, and concerts
- 8,280 youth summer camp registrations
- 117,950 free meals served throughout the year

In addition to supporting operations, the Parks Levy allows us to fund investments that energize downtown Portland and create a welcoming, safe, and vibrant city center for our community. Thanks to the Parks Levy, Portland Parks & Recreation:

- Made Pioneer Courthouse Square safer and cleaner by increasing security, general maintenance, and services with seven-days-a-week security, daily cleaning, and hiring a public restroom attendant.
- Increased downtown events by 20% and added new events like our first-ever Portland Winter Ice Rink at Waterfront Park.

- Supported downtown events with staff and Park Rangers attending and assisting as needed to ensure safe, clean, and vibrant events for Portlanders.
- Created partnership agreements to increase services at three major downtown parks to activate spaces, attract new events, improve security and cleaning, and coordinate partnership activities.

Parks Levy funds are helping revitalize downtown and bring exciting events back to the heart of the Portland while supporting treasured programming citywide.

Parks and recreation spaces, programming, and events have long been—and remain—at the top of the list of things community members and visitors value about our city. We are grateful for Portlanders' support of this levy and the investments it makes possible.

Thank you.

Sonia Schmanski

Sonia Schmanski

Deputy City Administrator, Vibrant Communities



From the Director

I'm excited to share the Year 3 Parks Levy Annual Report and the incredible impacts that a voter-approved funding source has on Portland's parks, natural areas, and recreation service operations.

With the support of the Parks Levy, Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) continues to center underserved communities in decision-making, programming, and engagement. In Year 3 of the Parks Levy, we strengthened existing efforts and created new and impactful programming in each of the service categories.

- **Recreation for All:** In 2024, PP&R piloted the brand-new Schools to Pools program, which offers free swim instruction to Portland Public School (PPS) second graders. Made possible by the Parks Levy, this program is providing life-saving swim instruction and reducing the challenges of registration, cost, and transportation. In our first two sessions, we served over 750 students from 14 schools. I'm excited about our partnership with PPS and plan to eventually serve all second graders across multiple districts. This program reflects the vision and energy of PPS leadership, PP&R's values, and the importance of Parks Levy funding.
- **Protect and Grow Nature:** Protect and Grow Nature includes protecting PP&R parks, trails, facilities, and more. In January 2024, Portland had one of the most intense winter storms in recent years. With fallen trees across the city and a critical need for warming shelters, PP&R services were essential to community safety and storm response. Thanks to the added staff from the

Parks Levy, PP&R was able to quickly and creatively respond to and address storm-related damages. These efforts protected existing buildings and structures from weather-related damage such as frozen pipes and tree hazards and made sure that parks, streets, and City facilities returned to clean and safe spaces. I'm proud of PP&R staff for their hard work and collaboration before, during, and after the storm.

- **Community Partnerships:** In fiscal year (FY) 2023–24, our Community Partnership Program served over 6,600 youth and expanded programming in PP&R facilities and parks. We extended the youth partnership grants for another year to keep serving Portlanders and meet Parks Levy commitments to serve teens and connect children experiencing poverty to nature. Strong and creative partnerships are a big part of our programs, and with the Parks Levy, we are reaching more people in meaningful ways.

This report shows how much we've grown and improved because of the Parks Levy, not only in FY 2023–24 but also in the past three years. In this report we show performance numbers and finances tied to each of the 15 voter commitments and include community stories and interviews. Year 3 has been successful and has shown progress toward the Parks Levy voter commitments, and I'm thankful for your continued investment and support.



Adena Long
Director, Portland Parks & Recreation



Executive Summary

In November 2020, Portland voters passed the Parks Local Option Levy (Parks Levy) to provide Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) with critical operating funding. Through a property tax of \$0.80 per \$1,000 of Assessed Value, the Parks Levy will bring in about \$47 million each year for five years. The tax started in 2021, and fiscal year (FY) 2023–24 is Year 3 of Parks Levy collection and spending. Annual reports for Years 1 and 2 are available at portland.gov/parks/parks-levy.

In FY 2023–24, the Parks Levy brought in \$52.47 million in revenues. PP&R used \$51.22 million to deliver the services that Portlanders voted for the Parks Levy to fund, including keeping parks clean and maintained, providing affordable recreation programs, and caring for nature and trees. Of those funds, \$50.82 million was spent on programs

and services and \$392,498 on reimbursing the amount of financial impact to the Portland Children's Levy caused by compression due to the Parks Levy under Oregon property tax law. After reimbursing expenditures and balancing the year-end expense buffer,¹ \$2.84 million in FY 2023–24 Parks Levy revenue will be retained for spending in Years 4 and 5 to deliver on voter commitments.

The language from the Parks Levy ballot measure had 15 commitments that PP&R is using to track the success of the Parks Levy. The 15 commitments are grouped under larger service areas: Recreation for All, Protect and Grow Nature, and Community Partnerships. This year's report shows the successes and progress made on all 15 Parks Levy commitments in Year 3.



¹ PP&R applied a buffer of \$2 million across all Parks Levy Functional Areas to avoid the possibility of over-expenditure at initial year-end close. Additional expenses posted in the second close used \$412,761 of this buffer. The remaining \$1.59 million of the buffer will be returned to the Parks Levy fund, resulting in an increase in FY 2023–24 by \$2.84 million (\$1.26 million from underspending and \$1.59 million from the return of the year-end buffer).

By the Numbers: Parks Levy Year 3



1,344,574

estimated
program
attendance



117,950

free meals
served



6,658

participants in
nature programming



35,786

TeenForce Pass
scans



10,393

swim lessons
participants



388,995

volunteer
hours



3,017

trees planted in
priority neighborhoods



3,321,125

pounds of trash
removed



793.22

acres of invasive
weeds treated



9,412

children registered for preschool,
SUN Community Schools,
after-school programs, and camps



\$4,167,239

financial assistance
provided



\$51.22

MILLION

Parks Levy
funding spent



Recreation for All

In FY 2023–24, PP&R had \$33.40 million in net expenses related to delivering services categorized under Recreation for All.¹ Of those net expenses, the Parks Levy funded \$17.60 million.

Voter commitment:²

C4 Prevent cuts to recreation programs, closures of community centers and pools

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Bringing back the Matt Dishman Community Center Block Party:** Block parties are a great way to build and celebrate community. Thanks to support from the Parks Levy, PP&R is able to bring back fun activities like the Matt Dishman Community Center Block Party. This free event returned after overcoming challenges from the pandemic and low staffing. More than 500 people enjoyed free food, music, dancing, and fun times!
- **Continued recreation programs and operating community centers and pools:** The Parks Levy funds programs and operational costs to keep

community centers and pools open. In FY 2023–24, the Parks Levy also helped keep programs going during the Mt. Scott Community Center renovation and expansion. With the Parks Levy, PP&R is able to keep offering, changing, and adding programs to make sure that community centers and pools stay open and busy.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$5.18 million—a portion of the total \$9.83 million net expenses for Recreation facility operations and rentals.

¹ The Parks Levy is providing critical funding to supplement funding from the City's General Fund, fee revenues, and other sources to deliver services. This report shares the net expenses from all revenue sources. Net expenses are program costs, including staffing, materials, and equipment, minus any related program revenue such as money collected from program fees. The Parks Levy supports a portion of the final net expenses for specific program areas that align with Parks Levy goals and commitments.

² The 15 commitments each have a code from their exhibit letter and the order in which they appear in the exhibit. Exhibit C and Exhibit D were included in the original resolution (Resolution No. 37498) and voter pamphlet. See "Ballot Title and Executive Summary" on page 15 for the full list.



Voter commitment:

D2 Deliver recreational programs, including, but not limited to, environmental education and access to nature for youth, summer camps, family-friendly movies and concerts, fitness and arts classes, teen- and senior-focused programs, life-saving swim lessons, and a summer playground program serving free lunches to children experiencing hunger.

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Schools to Pools:** Learning to swim is a life-safety skill, and PP&R is taking action to ensure that Portland youth have access to it. PP&R launched Schools to Pools, a new project with Portland Public Schools (PPS) to give free swim instruction to second graders across the city. This program, made possible by the Parks Levy, teaches water safety skills to young students, especially those in low-income families and communities of color. The program began in January 2024 and expanded in each of its first two sessions. At first, Schools to Pools served about 300 students from six schools. In the second session, that number climbed to more than 750 students from 14 schools. PP&R Director Adena Long and PPS Senior Director of Athletics Marshall Haskins are working to grow the program, with a goal of eventually reaching all PPS second graders.

- **Free Lunch + Play:** Portlanders love summer, and the [Free Lunch + Play](https://portland.gov/parks/arts-culture/summer-free-all/free-lunch) (portland.gov/parks/arts-culture/summer-free-all/free-lunch) program helps ensure that kids have fun and stay nourished. In summer 2023, Free Lunch + Play ran for 10 weeks, providing 4,570 total hours of programming and serving 58,416 summer meals—an increase of 37% from the previous year. The team operated 24 locations running Monday through Friday and five mobile sites in East Portland that were each set up twice a week. With the Parks Levy, the team made program changes to best serve youth, which included adding a new supervisor who specifically focused on making Free Lunch + Play even better. Three new sites were added, and lunch

service was changed from 60 minutes to 90 minutes across all PPS sites.

- **Increased attendance:** Actions taken to increase and improve programs mean more people participating in them. In FY 2023–24, PP&R programs had an estimated attendance of 1,344,574 people—an increase from the previous year. In addition, PP&R served 117,950 free meals throughout the year to youth and families through Free Lunch + Play, SUN Community Schools, and after-school programs.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$12.42 million—a portion of the approximately \$23.57 million total net expenses for recreation programs.



Voter commitment:

D3 Remove financial barriers for low-income households by ending current dependence on recreation fee revenues, allowing an equity-focused delivery of community events and programs and reducing the likelihood of further cuts to recreation offerings.

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- Access Discount:** The Parks Levy is helping to ensure that fees to participate in programs don't result in inequitable access. PP&R's discount option, now called the [Access Discount program](https://portland.gov/parks/discount) (portland.gov/parks/discount), started in fall 2022 to help Portlanders with the cost of activities. People who live in Portland can sign up for a free Access Discount of 25%, 50%, 75%, or 90% off PP&R programs. The discount is renewable every 12 months from the date of sign-up and no proof of income is required. It is suggested that those with a lower income or a higher number of family members consider selecting a greater discount. The Access Discount can be used to reduce the price of admission to community centers and pools; classes, camps, swim lessons, and other registered activities; preschool and after-school programs; and personal training. At the end of FY 2023–24, PP&R had 22,694 users signed up for the Access Discount and, in Year 3, the discount program allowed PP&R to provide \$4,167,239 in financial support to 17,997 users.





Protect and Grow Nature

PP&R had approximately \$56.23 million in total net expenses related to Protect and Grow Nature. Parks Levy funding provided \$29.88 million toward those expenses.

Voter commitments:

C1 Enhance and preserve parks, rivers, wetlands, trees, and other important natural features in urban areas for the benefit of all Portlanders and wildlife;

D1 Protect water quality and wildlife habitat, control erosion, remove invasive species in 8,000 acres of natural area.

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Protect the Best:** The [Protect the Best](https://portland.gov/parks/protect-best) (portland.gov/parks/protect-best) team works to stop the spread of invasive species by removing relatively isolated invasive species in important ecological areas, reducing the risk of wildfires, and addressing the impacts of climate change. Thanks to the Parks Levy, the Protect the Best team is fully staffed, with the addition of a full-time crew leader, a new trainee position, and two botanic technicians with specialized skills in performing vegetation management in hard- to-reach areas.
- **Repurposing storm debris for salmon habitat:** Following the January 2024 storm, PP&R's Urban Forestry team worked with the Bureau of

Environmental Services to recover storm debris such as fallen trees, logs, and root wads to be used in stream beds. These materials will slow water flows, create pools, enhance habitat, and facilitate gravel accumulation for salmon spawning beds.

- **Natural Asset Assessment program:** Tracking natural area health is critical to enhancing and preserving habitat, plants, water quality, and natural features. In 2023, with the support of the Parks Levy, PP&R started a new Natural Asset Assessment program to review the condition of PP&R's natural areas and features and track changes in conditions over time. The initial work created standards of evaluation, and in 2024, PP&R continued its assessment of 31 natural area sites and seven nature patches. Assessments will occur on a three-to-five-year rotation, and the results will inform broader natural area improvement work throughout Portland.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$2.77 million—a portion of the \$5.26 million total net expenses for natural area maintenance.

Voter commitment:

C3 Increase opportunities for communities of color and children experiencing poverty to connect with nature.

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Increased Environmental Education participation:** PP&R's [Environmental Education programs](https://portland.gov/parks/environmental-education) (portland.gov/parks/environmental-education) play a very important role in connecting youth and Portlanders to nature. In FY 2023–24, 6,658 youth participated in Environmental Education programs—an increase from the previous year. Environmental Education programs



include Nature Day Camp, Youth Conservation Crew, Ladybug Nature Walks, Teen Nature Team, and internships.

- **Forest Park 75th Anniversary:** PP&R celebrated 75 years of [Forest Park](https://portland.gov/parks/forest-park) (portland.gov/parks/forest-park) and worked with more partners to engage people with disabilities and communities of color. With a new permanent Forest Park coordinator role, PP&R partnered with organizations like Disabled Hikers and Vive NW to bring in diverse communities, offer hiking programs in both Spanish and English, and make Forest Park more accessible and inclusive through improvements to trails, infrastructure, and facilities.
- **Soft Surface Trails team expansion:** The Parks Levy is resulting in more proactive and equitable trail maintenance and increased partner engagement, especially with communities of color and underserved communities. With the Parks Levy, PP&R added two new positions to the Soft Surface Trails team, expanding it to a team of six. A new stewardship coordinator position has doubled the number of trail restoration events.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$982,803—a portion of the \$1.87 million total net expenses for Environmental Education.

Voter commitments:

C5 Enhance park maintenance to keep parks clean and safe, including litter and hazardous waste removal, restroom cleaning, and playground safety;

D4 Clean litter and hazardous waste in parks and natural areas, maintain grounds and landscaping, provide safety checks on play equipment, improve preventative and traditional maintenance;

D5 Keep public restrooms open and cleaner.

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Storm response and repair:** A big storm hit Portland in January 2024, bringing snow, ice, and strong winds to the city. But thanks to more staff and larger teams from the Parks Levy, PP&R could quickly and creatively respond to and repair storm damages.
 - *Urban Forestry:* PP&R's Urban Forestry team responded to more than 900 tree emergencies, made more than 750 roads safe again, and resolved over 470 work orders. With Parks Levy support, Urban Forestry could also be creative about tree debris cleanup, with fallen trees being reused for building and restoration materials. This level of support was possible because the Parks Levy has helped expand the Urban Forestry team so that PP&R had 23 arborists on-call and available to respond to tree-related emergencies on roads

and City property during the storm. This staffing level is more than double the 11 arborists on the team prior to the Parks Levy.

- *Professional Repair and Maintenance Services:* PP&R's Professional Repair and Maintenance Services team prepared for the storm by turning off water where freezing could occur and installing temporary heating for the Portland Tennis Center bubble. Throughout the storm, staff responded to emergencies at over 34 locations with storm-related issues such as power outages, frozen pipes and leaks, and general ice and snow removal. The team also tracked and examined facility damages to make sure that buildings would be ready to deliver critical services to the community once the ice melted.
- *Park and Natural Area Maintenance:* Land Stewardship staff helped clear major pathways into warming shelters and adapted to continue providing services as much as possible. Following the initial storm, the team worked tirelessly to problem-solve and restore access to trails, parks, and outdoor facilities. Staff across the city assessed damages and removed fallen trees across roads and trails in parks to restart maintenance work and restore public access to parks and natural areas. Because the Parks Levy expanded teams and leaderships structures in

the Land Stewardship division, more collaboration, flexibility, and assistance were (and are) possible in extreme circumstances.

- **Continued preventative and traditional maintenance:** PP&R continued to visit open restrooms for daily checks, cleaning, and repair. PP&R staff spent 16,236 hours on park restroom cleaning and care. The work orders and staff hours spent on preventative maintenance help keep assets functioning and limits decline in conditions. In addition, with the Parks Levy, PP&R has increased the number of Land Stewardship positions by approximately 45%. These new positions are providing critical capacity and support to remove litter and waste, clean restrooms, maintain landscaping, and improve the health of natural areas.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$20.95 million—a portion of \$39.28 million total net expenses for park and operational maintenance.

Voter commitments:

- **D6 Plant new trees in communities where today canopy coverage is lower, to improve air and water quality, diminish the impacts of climate change, and provide wildlife habitat;**
- **D7 Protect Portland's 1.2 million park trees by performing proactive maintenance, safety checks, hazard removal, and replacement of damaged trees in parks and natural areas.**

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Park Tree Maintenance Plan:** PP&R published the bureau's [Park Tree Maintenance Plan](https://portland.gov/trees/documents/park-tree-maintenance-plan-2024/download) (portland.gov/trees/documents/park-tree-maintenance-plan-2024/download), the first in the City's history. The plan outlines how PP&R's Urban Forestry division will perform park tree maintenance for public safety and park function; defines tree inspection standards; and establishes a standard of care for park trees, partnership, and evaluation.



In FY 2023–24, 116 PP&R properties received park tree inspections and more than 1,879 park trees received maintenance.

- **Portland Urban Forest Plan:** Thanks to the Parks Levy, PP&R now has the funding to update the [Portland Urban Forest Plan](https://portland.gov/trees/portland-urban-forest-plan) (portland.gov/trees/portland-urban-forest-plan). PP&R collected community feedback and used it to develop a vision and goals for the future. PP&R found that community members value Portland’s tree canopy and that they want more support to help care for it. Community members also want financial assistance to help maintain and preserve their trees; services like street tree maintenance; and education on tree care to make sure the urban forest is healthy and everyone can enjoy the benefits. Additional public review will occur before the plan is finalized in 2025.
- **More trees planted:** PP&R planted more trees in Priority Service Areas (areas where canopy levels are lowest and resources are most needed to address inequities) than the years prior to the Parks Levy. PP&R planted 3,815 trees—3,017 of which were in [Priority Service Areas](https://portland.gov/trees/priority-service-areas) (portland.gov/trees/priority-service-areas).

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$5.18 million—a portion of the \$9.83 million the tree-related total net expenses supported by the Parks Levy and General Fund.

Voter commitment:

D8 Modernize data systems to improve internal efficiency.

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Managing performance data:** PP&R is better tracking how well programs, activities, and services are doing. The bureau moved performance data into Microsoft Access, a database management system, to organize information and create clear reports on bureau performance measures. By doing this, PP&R can better connect performance measures to the Parks Levy, the Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland strategic framework, and more.
- **Reviewing the condition of developed parks:** PP&R’s Land Stewardship division started a project to enhance maintenance standards, developing a document that outlines best practices for maintaining developed parks and establishing a peer review process. The process is resulting in better maintenance best practices, evaluating conditions, and communicating funding needs. The process will be further improved by adding an electronic review form and tracking reviews in a database.
- **Tracking trees as assets:** PP&R’s Urban Forestry division now has the City’s first-ever software to manage trees as assets. Previously, tree work and tree plantings were tracked using a combination of software programs and paper documentation. The new technology improves efficiency, accuracy, and documentation, and allows tracking by individual trees.



Community Partnerships

PP&R had approximately \$6.34 million in total net expenses related to Community Partnerships. Parks Levy funding provided \$3.34 million toward those expenses.

Voter commitment:

D A community oversight committee will be appointed to review levy expenditures and to report annually to City Council. The Measure also directs the Bureau to provide for a performance audit to ensure that services funded by the levy are consistent with voter intent.

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Continued engagement of the Parks Levy Oversight Committee:** The [Parks Levy Oversight Committee](https://portland.gov/parks/ploc) (portland.gov/parks/ploc) meets quarterly to verify progress toward the Parks Levy's purposes, to advise on transparency and communication strategies, and to counsel on the annual report as well as an independent audit process. Committee members in Year 3 were Alescia Blakely, Zay Conant, Mary Ruble, Silas Sanderson, and Tim Williams. Casey Mills also attended Parks Levy Oversight Committee meetings as the liaison to the PP&R Board.
- **Parks Levy independent audit:** In May 2024, PP&R kicked off a performance audit with Sjoberg Evashenk Consulting Inc. to ensure that Parks Levy funds are being spent in a manner that follows to the language approved by voters

and to review PP&R's financial systems to make sure that Parks Levy dollars are clearly and accurately tracked. The audit will be completed in FY 2024–25 and shared publicly.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$257,343— a portion of the \$488,374 total net expenses for the oversight committee, Parks Levy communications, the independent audit, and other [Sustainable Future program](https://portland.gov/parks/sustainable-future) (portland.gov/parks/sustainable-future) initiatives.



Voter commitment:

D9 Prioritize services for communities of color and households experiencing poverty, including equity-centered engagement and outreach, community partnership grants, and increased engagement with volunteer and partner groups.

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Community Partnership Program:** PP&R continued providing the [Community Partnership Program](https://portland.gov/parks/cpp) (portland.gov/parks/cpp), which was started with the support of the Parks Levy and is administered jointly with PP&R's existing Teen Collaborative Initiative grant opportunity. In FY 2023–24, grantees served over 6,600 youth. The Community Partnership Program continues to expand and provide opportunities for additional partner collaboration and networking, including creating space use grants for free or low-cost programming at PP&R facilities.
- **Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center:** The Parks Levy is helping to support an expansion and redevelopment of [Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center](https://portland.gov/parks/interstate-firehouse-cultural-center) (portland.gov/parks/interstate-firehouse-cultural-center) as a center for Black arts and culture. With the Parks Levy, PP&R is able to complete a feasibility study and community engagement process. And with additional funding from the American Rescue Plan Act and the City of Portland's Relief and Recovery for Artists of Color program, and the support of the



Community Partnership Program, the center currently hosts 16 local artists through its residency program, which primarily gives Black and other artists of color space and financial support to create their work.

- **Equity and Anti-Racism Lens and the Decision Support Tool:** PP&R continues to use the [Equity and Anti-Racism Lens](https://portland.gov/parks/documents/equity-and-anti-racism-lens/download) (portland.gov/parks/documents/equity-and-anti-racism-lens/download) in budget and bureau decisions via the Decision Support Tool, a tool to make budget choices and decisions with many factors. By applying the Equity and Anti-Racism Lens to budget decisions, PP&R continues to invest in and provide services for underserved communities.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$3.08 million—a portion of the approximately \$5.85 million total net expenses for community engagement and equity services.



Voter commitment:

(c2) Provide park and recreation services to diverse populations including communities of color, seniors, teens, households experiencing poverty, immigrants and refugees, and people living with disabilities.

Key actions/programs in FY 2023–24

- **Programming for diverse populations:** PP&R provides services to diverse populations through programs, activities, maintenance in local parks, and more. Examples of how PP&R serves the specific populations listed in the Parks Levy commitment include but are not limited to:
 - Communities of color: PP&R continues to expand and enhance culturally specific programming to serve communities of color. Some examples include contracting LoveSome Hair to teach the history, meaning, and purpose of braided hair and centering Black women; offering an Israeli folk dancing class; and partnering with organizations that serve communities of color, such as APANO, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), and People of Color Outdoors.
 - Seniors: Lifelong Recreation offers recreational, educational, and wellness opportunities for adults age 60 and older. Activities include excursions and van trips, health and wellness, arts and crafts, music and

dance, sports and fitness, and hiking and walking.

- Teens: TeenForce, which is free for youth between the ages of 10 and 20 years old, is focused on giving young people the programs they need to thrive: help with homework, drop-in sports, field trips, chess clubs, help with resumes, a fun and safe place to hang out with peers, and so much more. In FY 2023–24, TeenForce Passes were scanned 35,786 times. PP&R also works to provide youth with employment through programs like the Youth Conservation Crew and swim instructor and lifeguard opportunities.
- Households experiencing poverty: The Access Discount offers up to 90% off program fees. In FY 2023–24, PP&R provided \$4.17 million in financial assistance. PP&R also offers free programming to make sure that cost does not keep people from participating in activities.
- Immigrants and refugees: Southwest Community Center offered English as

a Learning Language and marketed the program in partnership with Home Forward to reach people earning low incomes who are also in need of English language support.

- People with disabilities: Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation (AIR) programs offer community-based recreation activities, trips, and leisure services designed for teens and adults with disabilities. PP&R also offers inclusion services to provide meaningful access to all PP&R registered classes and activities to people with disabilities.

In Year 3 of the Parks Levy, PP&R delivered recreation programs and reduced cost as a barrier, enhanced and grew community partnerships, and connected with the community through increased engagement and free programming. Maintenance of parks, tree planting and park tree care, and natural area stewardship helped protect Portland's built park assets and nature. This Year 3 report celebrates the success of PP&R in delivering on the commitments made to Portland voters in the Parks Levy.



City of Portland

Measure 26-213

Referred to the People by the City Council.

BALLOT TITLE

EXHIBIT C

Restore recreation programs, parks, nature, water through five-year levy

Question: Shall Portland protect, restore recreation programs, parks, nature, clean water; 5-year operating levy, \$0.80 per \$1,000 assessed value, beginning 2021? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

Summary: Levy will prevent ongoing reductions to park services and recreation programs, preserve and restore park and natural area health, and center equity and affordable access for all.

Levy funds will:

- C1** • Enhance and preserve parks, rivers, wetlands, trees, and other important natural features in urban areas for the benefit of all Portlanders and wildlife;
- C2** • Provide park and recreation services to diverse populations including communities of color, seniors, teens, households experiencing poverty, immigrants and refugees, and people living with disabilities;
- C3** • Increase opportunities for communities of color and children experiencing poverty to connect with nature;
- C4** • Prevent cuts to recreation programs, closures of community centers and pools; and
- C5** • Enhance park maintenance to keep parks clean and safe, including litter and hazardous waste removal, restroom cleaning, and playground safety.

If levy fails, service improvements and restoration described above will not occur; taxes will not increase.

A five-member oversight committee will review levy expenditures, provide annual reports. Independent audit required.

Levy is \$0.80 per \$1,000 assessed home value. The proposed rate will raise approximately \$44,735,000, in 2021–2022, \$46,240,000 in 2022–2023, \$47,705,000 in 2023–2024, \$49,262,000 in 2024–2025, and \$51,135,000 in 2025–2026, for a total of \$239,078,000.

A median residential homeowner pays \$151 per year, or about \$13 per month.

- D6** • Plant new trees in communities where today canopy coverage is lower, to improve air and water quality, diminish the impacts of climate change, and provide wildlife habitat.
- D7** • Protect Portland's 1.2 million park trees by performing proactive maintenance, safety checks, hazard removal, and replacement of damaged trees in parks and natural areas.
- D8** • Modernize data systems to improve internal efficiency.
- D9** • Prioritize services for communities of color and households experiencing poverty, including equity-centered engagement and outreach, community partnership grants, and increased engagement with volunteer and partner groups.

D A community oversight committee will be appointed to review levy expenditures and to report annually to City Council. The Measure also directs the Bureau to provide for a performance audit to ensure that services funded by the levy are consistent with voter intent.

The City estimates that the levy tax rate of \$0.80/\$1,000 assessed value would cost a median residential property approximately \$13 per month, and would raise approximately \$45 million in the first year, with an estimated average of \$48 million raised each year for the five-year period. If this Measure is not approved, taxes for Park services will not be assessed.

Submitted by:

*Ted Wheeler, Mayor
City of Portland*

EXHIBIT D

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

This Measure would allow the City of Portland to levy \$0.80 per \$1,000 assessed value for five years for the purpose of operating the park system. The services and programs to be funded by this measure are planned to include, but are not limited to:

- D1** • Protect water quality and wildlife habitat, control erosion, remove invasive species in 8,000 acres of natural area.
- D2** • Deliver recreational programs, including, but not limited to, environmental education and access to nature for youth, summer camps, family-friendly movies and concerts, fitness and arts classes, teen- and senior-focused programs, life-saving swim lessons, and a summer playground program serving free lunches to children experiencing hunger.
- D3** • Remove financial barriers for low-income households by ending current dependence on recreation fee revenues, allowing an equity-focused delivery of community events and programs and reducing the likelihood of further cuts to recreation offerings.
- D4** • Clean litter and hazardous waste in parks and natural areas, maintain grounds and landscaping, provide safety checks on play equipment, improve preventative and traditional maintenance.
- D5** • Keep public restrooms open and cleaner.

PP&R is tracking progress on 15 commitments listed in the November 2020 voter pamphlet and approved by Portland voters. Exhibit C and Exhibit D were included in the original resolution (Resolution No. 37498) and voter pamphlet. The 15 commitments each have a code from their exhibit letter and the order in which they appear in the exhibit.

YEAR 3



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

For more information about the Parks Levy,
visit portland.gov/parks/parks-levy

