YEAR 1 ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22

PARKS HARM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



2021-22 DARS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Portland ensures meaningful access to City programs, services, and activities to comply with Civil Rights Title VI and ADA Title II laws, and reasonably provides translation, interpretation, modifications, accommodations, alternative formats, auxiliary aids, and services. Request these services online or call 503-823-2525, or for Relay Service or TTY contact 711.

503-823-2525
Traducción e Interpretación
Biên Dịch và Thông Dịch
口笔译服务
Устный и письменный перевод
Turjumaad iyo Fasiraad
Письмовий і усний переклад
Traducere și interpretariat
Chiaku me Awewen Kapas
अन्वादन तथा व्याख्या

The information in this report is accurate as of July 31, 2022.

From the Commissioner

In November 2020 Portlanders voted to pass the five-year Parks Local Option Levy (Parks Levy) to support Recreation for All, Protect and Grow Nature, and Community Partnerships by preventing cuts to park services and recreation programs, preserving and restoring park and natural area health, and centering equity and affordable access to all. This critical funding ensures that Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) can operate Portland's parks system and programs that provide recreation services to all and help conserve parks, nature, and clean water. Thank you for your investments in PP&R.

In addition to increasing equitable access and maintaining neighborhood parks, the Parks Levy was also crucial in providing programming throughout summer 2021 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Without the Parks Levy, PP&R would not have had sufficient resources to continue to provide recreation programs, and community centers, camps, and pools would have been closed indefinitely. Thanks to the Parks Levy, PP&R was able to provide critical outdoor recreation opportunities, including camps, classes, and open swim, for Portlanders of all ages in a COVID-safe and equitable way.

I thank all Portlanders for their continued support.

Commissioner Carmen Rubio City of Portland, Parks & Recreation

Call Rusi



From the Director

We are excited to celebrate the results of the Parks Levy and to share some highlights from Year 1, which include:

- Recreation for All—Return of summer programs. PP&R worked with City Council to get early access to Parks Levy resources before they were collected in November 2021, which allowed PP&R to deliver a COVID-19-responsive summer program in 2021. Programming included more than 15,000 swim lessons, summer camps for more than 7,500 kids, more than 100,000 nutritious meals served in the summer at over 30 park sites, Fitness in the Park classes for more than 2,000 people, pop-up concerts, and many other services throughout the city.
- Recreation for All—Affordable access. PP&R piloted a "Pay What You Can" pricing model to increase access to programs. In past PP&R surveys and community engagement, PP&R heard from the community that cost was a barrier to participation and that program costs disproportionately impacted people of color and families earning low incomes. The Parks Levy allowed PP&R to establish financial access models to reduce cost as a barrier. PP&R also partnered with culturally specific and community-based organizations to introduce summer programming to families that may not have participated in the past.
- Protect and Grow Nature—Increased care for parks, natural areas, and trees. Thanks to the Parks Levy, this year PP&R treated 874.55 acres of invasive weeds and collected 3,107,384 pounds of trash. The Bureau also created 85 new positions to increase park, natural area, and tree maintenance. These positions will expand PP&R's capacity to meet park and natural area maintenance needs across the city. With more than 11,000 acres of land, including 8,000 acres of natural areas, and 1.2 million park trees, PP&R's maintenance and enhancement of natural features is essential to climate resilience, protecting water quality and habitat, and ensuring ecological health in urban areas.

- Community Partnerships—Prioritizing transparency and oversight. PP&R established the Parks Levy Oversight Committee, composed of five community members selected from an open public applicant pool. The committee meets quarterly and reviews program implementation, advises the Bureau on transparency and communication strategies, and will counsel on an independent audit process.
- Community Partnerships—Strengthening and growing partnerships. PP&R expanded on the existing Teen Collaborative Initiative grant program to create a new Community Partnership Program focused on providing funding and in-kind support to community partners. PP&R is awarding approximately \$1.28 million to 20 organizations to provide youth and teen services to underserved communities over the next two years.

Year 1 of the Parks Levy has established the mechanisms to successfully deliver on voter commitments over the five years of the Parks Levy and beyond. In FY 2021-22 PP&R hired 1,416 full-time, part-time, seasonal, and casual staff. With Parks Levy funding, PP&R created 142 new full-time equivalent positions and restored hundreds of jobs to meet Parks Levy goals, increasing PP&R's capacity to provide services and programs to Portlanders. This increase in capacity will create living-wage jobs while helping the Bureau meet the needs of a growing parks system. The result will be cleaner parks, improved access to programs, increased care for the urban tree canopy, and a growing effort to center and learn from underserved communities.

PP&R is planting the seeds to better serve Portlanders. By Year 5 of the Parks Levy, we will have grown, with stronger partnerships, improved processes, and positive community outcomes. We are thankful for Portlanders' continued support.

With gratitude,

Portland Parks & Recreation

Executive Summary

In November 2020 Portland voters passed the Parks Local Option Levy (Parks Levy) to maintain neighborhood parks, improve access and safety, provide equitable recreation programs, and proactively care for natural areas and Portland's urban forest. The Parks Levy focuses on preventing cuts to park services and recreation programs, preserving and restoring park and natural area health, and centering equity and affordable access to all. It is a property tax of \$0.80 per \$1,000 of assessed value that will raise approximately \$48 million per year for five years, starting in 2021, to provide critical operating funds to deliver services.

To maximize Parks Levy funds and deliver on the Parks Levy's goals and commitments, PP&R is using the Leveraged Funding Model to fund Parks Levy-eligible costs. This means that the Bureau uses the full allocation of General Fund resources before tapping into Parks Levy funds; any underspending of Parks Levy funds on voter commitments is reserved for spending in future years. Parks Levy funds are not limited to spending within the fiveyear collection timeframe. In fiscal year 2021-2022 (FY 2021-22) the Parks Levy received \$44.69 million in revenues, of which PP&R spent \$19.11 million (\$18.73 million on PP&R programs and services, \$379,962 on reducing financial impact to the Portland Children's Levy caused by compression under Oregon

property tax law), leaving \$25.58 million of Parks Levy funding to be spent in future years.

The ballot measure centered on fifteen commitments and PP&R is using them to measure and report on the success of the Parks Levy. In this report, the commitments are grouped under larger service categories: Recreation for All, Protect and Grow Nature, and Community Partnerships. In FY 2021–22 PP&R made progress on all fifteen commitments. Highlighted examples follow, with additional details in the full report.





Voter commitment:

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

Key actions/programs in FY 2021-22

- *Revenue stabilization:* Without the Parks Levy, community centers, camps, and pools would have faced significant delays in reopening. The Parks Levy provided Recreation Services with financial support for programs, community centers, and pools. Additionally, the Parks Levy reduced the need for PP&R to charge fees that were historically needed to keep programs and facilities running. This revenue support helped stabilize PP&R's budget when the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health guidelines remained uncertain and allowed PP&R to keep facilities open, provide services and programs, and reduce cost as a barrier through financial assistance.
- *Return of summer programs:* City Council's Parks Levy referral to the ballot promised restoration of summer programs in 2021. PP&R requested and received

City Council's approval for early access to Parks Levy funds to deliver a COVID-19-responsive summer program in 2021. With the funds, PP&R was able to reopen pools and restart outdoor programming in COVID-safe environments.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$2.15 million—a portion of the \$6.39 million net expenses for Recreation facility operations.

Voter commitment:

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 2021–22

• *Increased attendance:* Even with the continued impact of pandemic-related public

. 2

^{*} The fifteen commitments each have a code from their exhibit letter and 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 page 10 for the full list.

health guidelines, PP&R programs had an estimated attendance of 874,780 people—an increase from the previous year. In addition, PP&R served more than 173,190 free meals throughout the year to youth and families through Free Lunch + Play, SUN Community Schools, and after-school programs.

• Summer 2021 programming: PP&R was able to safely deliver summer programs in FY 2021–22 as public health conditions and protocols allowed. Programming included more than 15,000 swim lessons, summer camps for over 7,500 kids, Fitness in the Park classes for more than 2,000 people, and popup concerts and other services throughout the city.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$2.90 million—a portion of the approximately \$10.69 million net expenses for recreation programs.

Voter commitment:

Remove financial barriers for lowincome 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 2021–22

• Pay What You Can and Access Discount pilots: In 2021 PP&R piloted two new discount models that provided discounts of up to 90% of activity fees. In the first year of their implementation, PP&R provided \$1,112,217 in financial assistance to 7,948

people. This was significantly more than PP&R had provided in years past, where only about \$565,000 in fee reductions was provided through scholarships and financial assistance. PP&R plans on moving forward with a model where users will register annually for an Access Pass that will apply a discount automatically at the time of program registration and to drop-in activities.





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 2021–22 *Increased invasive species removal:*

PP&R increased the annual number of invasive species treated annually, improving the health of ecosystems in PP&R parks and natural areas. In FY 2021–22 PP&R treated 874.55 acres of invasive weeds.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$817,194—a portion of the \$2.38 million net expenses for natural area maintenance.

Voter commitment:

(3) Increase opportunities for communities of color and children experiencing poverty to connect with nature.

Key actions/programs in FY 2021-22

• Increased Environmental Education participation: PP&R had an estimated 2,667

participants in Environmental Education (EE) programming—an increase from the previous year. EE programs include Nature Day Camp, Youth Conservation Crew, Ladybug Nature Walks, Teen Nature Team, and internships. EE programming plays an essential role in connecting youth and Portlanders to nature.

• Engagement and outreach for Environmental Education programs:

PP&R's EE programs actively work to engage and provide services to communities of color and children experiencing poverty. PP&R's early registration opportunity allows partner organizations' communities to sign up one week early for EE registered programs. In addition, PP&R works closely with Title I and SUN Community Schools to recruit students for Teen Nature Team and Youth Conservation Crew programs, and with local partner organizations to reach underserved communities for the Ladybug Nature Walk program.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$445,866—a portion of the \$1.41 million net expenses for EE.

Voter commitments:

Cs 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 2021–22

- Work order prioritization: Park maintenance is prioritized using Equity and Level of Service scores when work is assigned. Equity scores show the percentages of youth, residents of color, and households with lowincome levels that live near a park. Level of Service scores reflect how well an area is served, highlighting where there are parks with lower servicing than average. Repair and maintenance teams use these scores in addressing maintenance needs to ensure that all parks, particularly those in East and Southeast Portland where Equity and Level of Service scores are lower, are well serviced. This prioritization method helps PP&R reduce inequities and ensure that everyone gets to enjoy the benefits of well-maintained parks.
- *Increased maintenance staff:* In FY 2021–22 PP&R hired 23 of the 68 approved new park and natural area maintenance-related positions. These new positions will expand PP&R's capacity to remove litter and waste, clean restrooms, maintain landscaping, repair

- equipment in parks and community centers, and ensure playground safety.
- Increased checking and cleaning of open public restrooms: PP&R increased the number of open restrooms that receive a daily check, cleaning, and repair. In FY 2021–22 PP&R maintenance staff visited 82% of open restrooms daily.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$8.40 million—a portion of \$26.56 million net expenses for park and operational maintenance.

Voter commitments:

ob 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;
object Portland's 1.2 million

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 2021–22

- *More trees planted:* PP&R planted more trees in Planting Priority neighborhoods (neighborhoods where canopy levels are lowest and where resources are most needed to address inequities) than the years prior to the Parks Levy. In FY 2021–22 PP&R planted 2,455 trees—1,467 of which were in Planting Priority neighborhoods.
- *Increased tree maintenance staff:* In FY 2021–22 PP&R created 17 new positions

related to tree maintenance and the urban forest to expand PP&R's capacity to provide tree maintenance. Without the Parks Levy, trees in PP&R parks and natural areas only received emergency and reactive maintenance, since PP&R had not previously had the resources to perform proactive maintenance. New positions will create the opportunity for PP&R to better care for park trees.

Funding

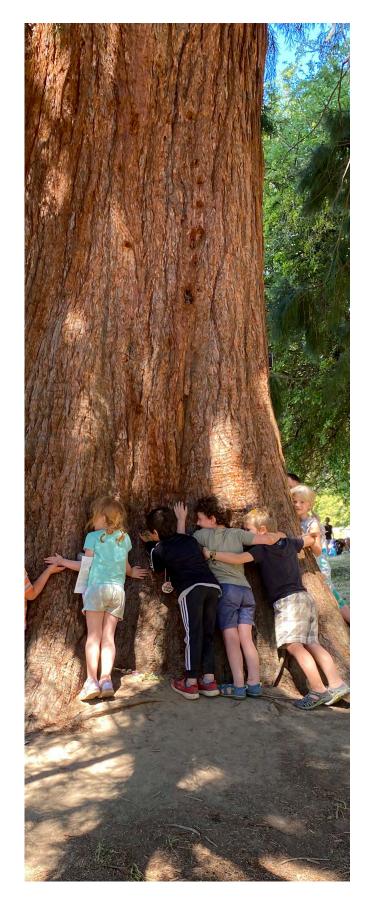
Parks Levy funds spent: \$1.81 million—a portion of the \$6.41 million tree-related net expenses.

Voter Commitment:

Modernize data systems to improve internal efficiency.

Key actions/programs in FY 2021–22

- Volunteer management software: In FY 2021–22 PP&R purchased a new volunteer management database that will support staff and provide metrics about volunteer and partner organizations for analysis and inclusion, resulting in increased engagement with volunteer and partner groups.
- Work order system upgrade: PP&R has budgeted a \$5 million one-time investment to upgrade the Bureau's maintenance work order system. This is a critical database that tracks both all the work done in parks and natural areas and the work that needs to be done. This investment supports maintenance of parks, natural areas, trees, pools, and community centers.





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 2021–22

• Established the Parks Levy Oversight
Committee: The Parks Levy Oversight
Committee was established July 1, 2021, to
verify general compliance with the Parks
Levy and progress toward the Parks Levy's
purposes, advise on transparency and
communication strategies, and counsel on the
annual report and a future independent audit
process. The committee meets quarterly.
Committee members are Alescia Blakely,
Judy BlueHorse Skelton, Maria Velez, Paul
Agrimis, and Silas Sanderson.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$100,879—a portion of the total \$293,443 net expenses for the oversight committee, Parks Levy communications, and other Sustainable Future Program 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 2021-22

- Community Partnership Program: PP&R created the Community Partnership Program (www.portland.gov/parks/cpp), building off of PP&R's existing Teen Collaborative Initiative grant opportunity. PP&R awarded approximately \$1.28 million to 20 organizations to provide youth and teen focused programming and services between July 2022 and June 2024. This new opportunity will complement PP&R's current investment in community grants and agreements of more than \$2.62 million annually.
- Equity and Anti-Racism Lens and the Decision Support Tool: After developing the Equity and Anti-Racism Lens in 2021, available at www.portland.gov/parks/equityhub, PP&R embedded it in a new Decision Support Tool, a common framework to evaluate budget choices and investment decisions through an integrated lens. By applying the Equity and Anti-Racism Lens to budget decisions, PP&R continues to prioritize investment and services for underserved communities.

- Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland community engagement: Outreach as part of Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland (www. portland.gov/parks/healthy-parks), PP&R's strategic framework, is intentional in centering specific communities and raising the voices of groups that have previously been excluded on the basis on race, ability, national origin, income level, gender, and/or age. In 2021 PP&R completed its first wave of Listening & Learning to inform drafts of PP&R's new Mission, Vision, Values, and Racial Equity Statements. The second wave in 2022 is gathering feedback on the drafts.
- Early registration and multiple registration periods: To reduce barriers to access, PP&R opened a one-week pre-registration window for registered activities and shared this opportunity with partners that work with underserved communities. While no individual was turned away during this window, PP&R focused on outreach to organizations that work with communities that have historically had less access to PP&R activities. In addition, PP&R also shifted from one registration period for all summer programming to two periods spaced throughout the summer. The registration window itself was shortened from four months to four weeks to provide more access to individuals with less discretionary funds. This shift allows for flexibility and a second chance for users to get into programs that filled quickly for the first session.

Funding

Parks Levy funds spent: \$2.10 million—a portion of the approximately \$6.44 million net expenses for community engagement and equity services.

Voter commitment:

(2) 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 2021-22

- *ADA coordinator:* The Parks Levy allowed for an expansion of PP&R's Equity and Inclusion team, including the hiring of an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator. This position will help ensure that PP&R's programs, facilities, and services are inclusive of people living with disabilities.
- Data disaggregation: As part of Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland, PP&R is identifying performance measures, with the ability to look across different populations where appropriate. By establishing mechanisms and enhanced systems by which PP&R can collect demographic data, survey responses, registrant information, and more, PP&R can evaluate if the actions being taken are benefitting the diverse populations highlighted in the Parks Levy commitments.
- 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 operates eleven Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Community Schools, all located in North and East Portland. More than 65% of the students served are people of color or people from culturally specific communities. SUN School programming

- supports healthy development, academic success, and increased parent and family involvement.
- Communities of color. PP&R's Aquatics team set up partnerships with Black Swimming Initiative and WaterStrong to bring drowning-prevention swim events to North Portland neighborhoods. Children 6 months and older and their caregivers learned basic water safety and swimming skills and the principles of water stewardship.
- Seniors. PP&R's Lifelong Recreation program offers recreational, educational, and wellness opportunities for adults age 60 and older. Activities include excursions, health and wellness, arts, music and dance, sports and fitness, and hiking and walking.
- <u>Teens</u>. PP&R's TeenForce program offers free trips, classes, drop-in activities, events, and volunteer and service outings for teens citywide all year long. In FY 2021–22 TeenForce Passes were used 22,778 times for events, activities, programs, and more.
- Households experiencing poverty. Financial assistance programs offer up to 90% off program fees. In FY 2021–22 PP&R provided \$1.11 million in financial assistance to program users. In addition, Free Lunch + Play provides free summertime meals and activities for kids in neighborhoods where 50% or more of youth qualify for free or reduced school lunches.
- <u>Immigrants and refugees</u>. More than 20% of people who use PP&R's community gardens prefer a language other than English, speaking or signing more than 20 different languages. Over the past

- year, PP&R's Community Gardens Team expanded the library of translated documents, provided interpretation services over the phone and at in-person events, and offered outreach materials in 12 different languages.
- <u>People living with disabilities</u>. Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation (AIR) programs offer community-based recreation activities, trips, and leisure services designed for teens and adults who live with a disability and/or special needs. PP&R also offers inclusion services to provide meaningful access to all PP&R registered classes and activities for people living with disabilities.

In Year 1 of the Parks Levy, community centers, pools, and facilities were able to remain open for community use and programming while significantly growing the availability of financial assistance. Maintenance services increased in parks and natural areas. Expanded partnerships helped reach diverse and underserved communities. Year 1 has laid the groundwork for continued delivery of the commitments made to Portland voters.



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

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

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; Increase opportunities for communities of color and **C3** children experiencing poverty to connect with nature; Prevent cuts to recreation programs, closures of community centers and pools; and **C4**

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

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.

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

Protect water quality and wildlife habitat, control erosion

remove invasive species in 8,000 acres of natural area. 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 seniorfocused programs, life-saving swim lessons, and a summer playground program serving free lunches to children experiencing hunger. 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.

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

Keep public restrooms open and cleaner.

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

Protect Portland's 1.2 million park trees by performing proactive maintenance, safety checks, hazard removal, and replacement of damaged trees in parks and natura

Modernize data systems to improve internal efficiency 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.

A community oversight committee will be appointed to revie 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

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

> PP&R is tracking progress on the fifteen 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 fifteen commitments each have a code from their exhibit letter and order in which they appear in the exhibit.

By the Numbers: Parks Levy Year 1







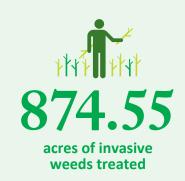








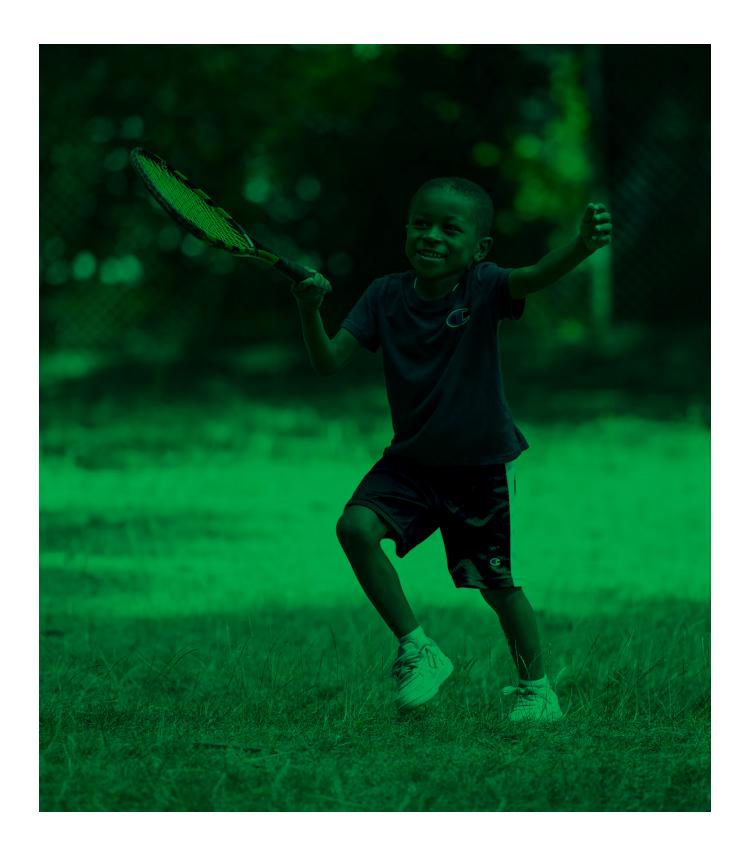












For more information about the Parks Levy, visit portland.gov/parks/parks-levy.