

TUMWATER PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
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CONVENE: 8:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Chair Eileen Swarthout and Councilmembers Michael Althausen and Angela Jefferson.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Transportation & Engineering Director Brandon Hicks, Engineering Services Manager Bill Lindauer, Program Manager Patrick Soderberg, Engineer I Bernie Gertje, Community Engagement Specialist Marnie McGrath, Sustainability Coordinator Alyssa Jones Wood, Water Resources Specialist David Kangiser, and Administrative Assistant Bonnie Hale.

Others: Meridith Greer, Greer Environmental Consulting

**GRANT
AGREEMENT WITH
THE DEPARTMENT
OF ECOLOGY FOR
THE PIONEER PARK
RESTORATION
PROJECT
AMENDMENT 1:**

Meridith Greer reported the project is focused in the southern area of the Deschutes River along Pioneer Park. The active site continually moves with 10 feet of movement by the river each year. Previous designs were created in 2015 for the project; however with the change in the river environment, staff is exploring options for stabilizing the riverbank and restoring some riparian areas to benefit the area. The Deschutes River has many limiting factors affecting its ability to be considered a healthy watershed due to fine sediment, higher temperatures, and the lack of woody debris. Deschutes River is considered an asset for the community with Pioneer Park and trails used extensively by the public.

In 2021, the City received a \$450,000 grant from the Department of Ecology to fund design, permitting, and construction of a solution. The City contracted with a river restoration consultant. The initial grant agreement covered a span of three years. Project work began in 2021 and continued until June 2022. At the last update, the permitting process was forecasted to continue through early 2023. However, the project stalled because of difficulty in obtaining a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to work in the river because of agency issues and resources that would have postponed issuance of a permit for two years affecting the timeline of the project and the grant.

Consequently, over the last 18 months, staff pursued alternatives and proposes separating the projects into two phases. The first phase, effective from 2022 through 2025 focuses on upland work. The work improves the project scope without requiring a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Ms. Greer shared an illustration of the basic design. As Pioneer Park is prone to frequent flooding, the work will enhance natural flood channels and reduce shear force along the riverbank to reduce erosion. The scope includes riparian plantings in the upland area.

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Phase 2 of the project from 2025 through 2027 includes in-water work, which requires permits. In-water work for the project would stabilize the riverbank using different mechanical methods and native plantings to help reduce the steepness of the bank to decrease the bank slope and replanting the bank. Ms. Greer noted that any work in the river below the high water line requires a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. Phase 2 will benefit fish and other aquatic life because of the addition of large woody debris and habitat channels.

The current agreement with the Department of Ecology in 2021 must account for changes in the project. The change in project scope includes only Phase 1 for the upland work. Staff is also moving some items within the budget of \$450,000 to other tasks contributing to the project. Additionally, the timeline for the grant would be extended from October 2024 to October 2025 affording more flexibility to complete design and begin construction. The City also secured funding for Phase 2 of \$500,000 from the Department of Ecology. The grant requires no match.

Manager Soderberg requested approval to place the Grant Agreement with the Department of Ecology for the Pioneer Park Restoration Project Amendment 1 on the September 17, 2024 City Council consent calendar with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign.

Councilmember Althaus commented that he assumes the Department of Ecology agreed with the change in the project scope breaking the project into phases. Ms. Greer confirmed that staff has been working with the grant team from the Department of Ecology as the grant was revised to include only Phase 1. The Department has been supportive and understands the dynamic nature of working in rivers as they continually move. The new phase of work includes engagement with local stakeholders to review 60% design. Stakeholders include members from the Squaxin Island Tribe, Department of Ecology, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and local Deschutes River stakeholders to receive feedback on the effectiveness of the design and changes in the project.

Chair Swarthout asked whether the channels currently exist or created by the project. Ms. Greer reported the City completed a modeling project in 2023 targeting the river from Henderson Boulevard to the Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls. A consultant modeled a drop of water traveling through the river during flooding incidents to identify the source of river channels in Pioneer Park. The information supports the first phase of the project. Channels reflected in the illustration is river water normally flowing along the edge of the park. The project will enhance and encourage water flows through those channels to increase capacity by naturally deepening the channels by two to four feet.

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Chair Swarthout asked whether the project will assist in the eventual connection of the trails from Brewery Park at Tumwater Falls to Pioneer Park. Ms. Greer responded that the trail intersecting with Pioneer Park is further north of the project site. The City plans to construct a bridge over the Deschutes River as part of the trail project. She works closely with staff from the Transportation and Engineering Department to update them on the project to ensure efforts on the river do not affect the construction of the bridge.

MOTION:

Councilmember Jefferson moved, seconded by Councilmember Althausser, to approve placement of the Grant Agreement with the Department of Ecology for the Pioneer Park Restoration Project Amendment 1 on the September 17, 2024 City Council consent calendar with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

**INTERAGENCY
AGREEMENT WITH
WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE FOR
STATE HOME
ELECTRIFICATION
AND APPLIANCE
REBATES
PROGRAM:**

Coordinator Jones Wood said the proposal supports a strategy in the Thurston Climate Mitigation Plan to convert to cleaner fuel sources in the region. Thurston County's largest sources of emissions are from buildings and energy based on the 2022 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. An important action is to secure sustainable energy and phase out natural gas, fuel, oil, and wood in homes. Residential energy emissions reflect a 31% increase related to natural gas between the baseline year and the 2022 inventory. The intent is to convert to cleaner fuel sources to assist in meeting emission reduction targets.

This year, the Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative developed two regional initiative programs. The first is the Residential Energy Efficiency and Electrification Campaign of four main components of a web-based information hub at www.wa.switchison.org, local incentives, outreach and marketing to the community about the concept of home energy efficiency and electrification, and establishing an advisory support service for community members.

The grant is \$477,540 from the Climate Commitment Act to help improve the lives of Tumwater residents. No City match is required. All grant funds must be expended by June 30, 2025. The regional launch in early 2025 affords six months for staff to complete the work. Funding will cover a variety of high efficiency all-electric home appliances including space heating, hot water heating, dryers, conduction ranges, and associated wiring and panel upgrades. Additionally, up to 15% of the funding can be used for outreach, education, and program administration. All appliances must meet specific energy requirements and be energy star certified.

Residents benefitting from the program are low and moderate-income households making up to 120% of the area median income. The City's

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first priority is working with low-income single-family and multi-family households with an income of 80% or below the area median income as well as with moderate single-family and multi-family households with incomes between 80% and 120%.

The City's program is designed to ensure no out-of-pocket expenses are required from participants to maximize benefits to those struggling financially to make changes. The program design in the scope of the work for the grant provides turnkey installations for full home electrification for income qualified households. Staff anticipates that the grant will benefit 20 to 40 homes in the City. The first round of outreach is to 191 residents who are income-qualified for receiving lower utility bills from the City. The Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative is working to obtain a group purchase discount for appliances and installers.

The program was designed based on other successful models throughout the country to include Olympia's Energize Olympia Program.

Residents receiving benefits will sign up and attend a workshop to learn about the program and expectations.

Coordinator Jones Wood requested approval to place the Interagency Agreement with Washington Department of Commerce for State Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates Program on the September 17, 2024, City Council agenda under *Council Considerations* with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign.

Councilmember Althausen asked about any implications to the City should a ballot initiative overturn the Climate Commitment Act. Coordinator Jones Wood advised that the Department of Ecology is exploring the issue for all Climate Commitment Act grants. Based on her understanding, the funds are secure until June 30, 2025 with future rounds of funding uncertain with the potential of continuing the program with funding from the City or through other grant sources, such as Community Development Block Grant funds.

Councilmember Althausen asked about the potential scenario of the City receiving a high number of applications in terms of criteria for selecting households for participation in the program. Coordinator Jones Wood responded that a similar situation occurred in the City of Olympia through its program. The City of Olympia created a waitlist. A meeting is scheduled with staff team representatives from the Thurston Climate Mitigation Collaborative to discuss program design for the region for consistency between the jurisdictions.

Councilmember Althausen said he supports an income-based approach to the degree of promoting equity into the process for historically

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underserved communities or lower-income neighborhoods.

Coordinator Jones Wood addressed questions about the types of homes eligible to participate. The program is available to both single-family homes and multi-family homes. Renters wishing to participate must obtain permission from the property owner. Additionally, the group purchase discount for appliances obtained by the program would be available to anyone regardless of their income who lives in the Thurston region.

MOTION: **Councilmember Jefferson moved, seconded by Councilmember Althausser, to approve placement of the Interagency Agreement with Washington Department of Commerce for State Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates Program on the September 17, 2024, City Council agenda under *Council Considerations* with a recommendation to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

ADDITIONAL There were no additional items.
ITEMS:

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Chair Swarthout adjourned the meeting at 8:32 a.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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