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DEI Committee – proposed agenda item brief

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### The Wilsonville Living Classroom Project

I would like to put forth for the DEI Committee's consideration a grant proposal focused on environmental education within a larger habitat restoration project at the Park at Merryfield Neighborhood Park. The title of the grant proposal is the Wilsonville Living Classroom Project (WLCP).

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development's (ODLCD) Community Green Infrastructure Grant helps fund the production of native seeds and plants; creates and implements green infrastructure master plans; and carries out community green infrastructure projects that provide direct social, environmental, and economic benefits to communities throughout Oregon.

There is significant habitat restoration potential within the Park at Merryfield Neighborhood Park and with the proximity to Inza R. Wood Middle School, Boones Ferry Primary School, The Center for Research in Environmental Sciences and Technologies (CREST) and the regional nature park at Graham Oaks, staff thought a prudent way to address the environmental enhancement and education goals of the ODLCD grant would be to propose an outdoor, living classroom. This space will provide Wilsonville students with a place to congregate and get their hands dirty all while engaging with place-based learning. The WLCP also meets a need with recent budget cuts to the West Linn Wilsonville School District (WLWSD) that paused funding and operations for CREST. This proposal will create a publicly accessible educational space for students to engage in unique curriculum and bring their families to engage with the site as well being in a public park.

We have already recognized a number of potential partners for this project – WLWSD, Friends of Trees and the Backyard Habitat Certification Program, and supporting staff are waiting on letters of support from all three of these entities. Collaborating with local educators and community groups will help create an inclusive space with interpretation, low impact infrastructure, and connection to existing assets within the city. This collaboration could also help shape curriculum associated with the living classroom and how the actual restoration work is carried out. Instructors and community leaders involved in the planning and shaping of curriculum for the WLCP will be fairly compensated for their time and stipends are built into the proposed project budget.

What staff is seeking from the DEI Committee is feedback on this proposal, a vote or nod of support, and a letter of support for developing a new outdoor education space particular to Wilsonville and its constituents. This grant proposal is not only a way to secure funding for habitat restoration work within the City's existing network of open space, but a means to illustrate a commitment to environmental education and engagement for the whole of community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this Community Green Infrastructure grant proposal idea.