



## Legislation Text

---

File #: 20-351, Version: 1

---

### Willamette Falls Legacy Project and Willamette Falls Trust Grant Agreement

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION (Motion):**

Approval of the Willamette Falls Legacy Project and Willamette Falls Trust Grant Agreement

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The agreement between the Willamette Falls Legacy Project and Willamette Falls Trust lapsed and a formalized agreement is needed to support the work the Trust has been performing at the request of the Partners. The agreement was identified as one of the next steps at the May 12<sup>th</sup> City Commission Work Session. The agreement is valid until June 30, 2022.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2011, the 23-acre Blue Heron Paper Mill at the edge of the falls closed. Catalyzing the successful redevelopment of the site was beyond the capacity of any one organization, so Oregon City, Metro, Clackamas County, and the State of Oregon formed a partnership (the Partners) to honor and reimagine the Willamette Falls Legacy Project (WFLP) site. This intergovernmental agreement (IGA) gives decision making authority to the Partners on behalf of each agency. As part of this IGA, the Partners recognized the need and opportunity to have support from the non-profit sector in fundraising and other activities to achieve the lofty vision of a world class Riverwalk costing as much as \$150 million. To meet this need, the Partners formed a non-profit in 2015, now named Willamette Falls Trust (WFT), to meet needs of the project which the four government agencies were unable to.

In 2019, the agreement between the WFLP and WFT was scaled back significantly to provide clearer relationship between the non-profit and the government agencies during a time when a key bond measure was going before the public for a vote. Progress on the project did not stop during this time. The Partners recognized that there was an opportunity for deeper engagement with the Native American Community, and that their input might have a significant impact on design aspects of the project. The Partners also recognized that a more thorough identification of programming possibilities was necessary to ensure that the construction did not result in a site that could not offer the kinds of programming expected by the community and representative of a world class experience. A scope of work was identified that was sufficiently engaging so as to appeal to the philanthropic community and meet some of the needs of the project. The WFT, in good faith, advanced the scope of work while this new agreement was being negotiated.

The new agreement being considered by the Commission today reflects that scope of work. The tasks the Partners have asked the Trust to perform on their behalf reflect a balance between the needs of the project, areas of meaningful engagement with the philanthropic community, and areas where the public agencies lack capacity. The proposed agreement acknowledges the following:

- **Community Engagement.** The Trust conducts site tours, donor prospecting, leadership recruitment, and other events.

- Fundraising. The Trust pursues funding for riverwalk projects. Over \$7 million has been raised to date towards the riverwalk.
- Attendance at Events & Meetings. The Trust has been attending events and regular project meetings.
- Defining Expectations for World Class Programming. WFT has been leading initial planning for active programming of the riverwalk for the Legacy Project. This planning will define the scope of “world class” active programming and articulate design requirements. This will also establish the baseline for determining programming feasibility and may include recommending organizational relationships to deliver “world class” active programming. The programming planning will include approaches and recommendations for curating narratives and options for scaling programming in conjunction with completion and opening of each phase of the riverwalk. The details of implementation are not being addressed at this time. Approval of the agreement does not authorize the WFT to implement programming once the riverwalk is open.
- Design input. WFT participates in the design of Phase 1 of the riverwalk to ensure the physical design does not preclude future programming and interpretation opportunities. In addition, WFT collaborates with indigenous people and affected tribes to understand how they may be included in future programming of the riverwalk.

The agreement was identified as one of the next steps at the May 12th City Commission Work Session where a briefing of the project was provided to the Commission. This grant agreement includes an updated date for dispersal of funds for prior work from the version included in the June 17th City Commission agenda. The agreement term extends to June 30, 2022.

#### Frequently Asked Questions Related to the Above:

Q: When will the design of Phase 1 of the riverwalk be final? When will construction start for the riverwalk? When will the riverwalk be open?

A: It is unknown at this time.

Q: Who is responsible for maintenance of the riverwalk?

A: The project partners tentatively agreed that Oregon City has the greatest interest in maintaining the hardscaping and implement the programming of the riverwalk while Metro would be responsible for maintenance of the habitat area. Formalizing these relationships require greater understanding of phase 1, the final design, and the role of the new property owner.

Q: What is programming?

A: Programming can be organized into two general categories:

- Historic/Cultural Interpretation. Heritage activities, and historic and cultural interpretation consists of how the site’s past will be told. The riverwalk will serve as a key referral to the many rich heritage resources in the Oregon City vicinity. WFLP is developing on-site interpretation in accordance with the project’s Interpretive Framework.
- Placemaking. Placemaking programming consists of envisioning how the public uses the riverwalk. Examples of placemaking include activities, experiences, and events which will

occur on the riverwalk, such as tribal ceremonies, historic lectures, tours, dance exhibitions, utilization of informal and formal play spaces, educational series, classes, festivals, concerts and food carts.

Q: How will the programming onsite be created?

A: The project partners continue coordination early and often with a variety of stakeholders to assure that all of the vision and expectations of stakeholders are aligned. The grant agreement authorizes the Willamette Falls Trust to begin the work of refining the community's vision into a high level determination of the caliber of acceptable programming onsite. The details of programming would be further refined later in the process and established incrementally as the riverwalk is constructed. The Commission recognized the need to acknowledge the unique characteristics of the site and coordinate programming with a variety of stakeholders such as tourism, economic development, and the property owner. Just as the site and the riverwalk are anticipated to be developed incrementally over time, so is the programming. The property owner may also have programming independent of the riverwalk.

Q: Who is responsible for implementing the programming of the riverwalk?

A: The partners agreed that Oregon City has the greatest interest in ensuring quality programming. The City Commission indicated at their February 5th Work Session that the programming of the riverwalk would likely be carried out by a third party with some representation/coordination/oversight from the City. At this point the mechanics of who will implement the programming has yet to be worked out. Future agreements will follow procurement rules and be brought before the City Commission at a public meeting so the public will have an opportunity to weigh in.

Q: Who will pay for programming the riverwalk?

A: As the riverwalk is developed incrementally, programming is expected to expand onsite. It is expected that programming will require public financial support to achieve the expectations set by the public.

Q: Will the riverwalk be a charter park?

A: Likely not, though that will be reviewed in greater detail

**OPTIONS:**

1. Approve grant agreement
2. Do not approve grant agreement

**BUDGET IMPACT:**

Amount: \$50,000 per Year

FY(s): 2019-20 and 2020-21

Funding Source: Budgeted from the Willamette Falls Legacy Project