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2010-11

Outcomes Summary

North Portland Enhancement Grant
Program

June 2011

About Metro

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy, and sustainable transportation and living choices for people and businesses in the region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges and opportunities that affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to providing services, operating venues and making decisions about how the region grows. Metro works with communities to support a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Together we're making a great place, now and for generations to come.

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NORTH PORTLAND ENHANCEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

2010-2011 project highlights

While economists debated the disputed, if not wobbly, signs of a back-from-the-brink economic recovery in 2010, Metro Council gave North Portland residents some sure support when it approved a \$23,000 grants package earmarked for neighborhood improvements. Funds went to organizations delivering food and home furnishings to local residents, to projects reducing public demand on energy resources and to programs ensuring access to a safe, healthy environment for everyone.

Metro made the best of the situation by maintaining and enhancing some existing community programs that helped make neighborhoods safer and more livable. Special consideration was given to applicants with matching funds and partnerships that leveraged other support.

The North Portland fund was created from a 50-cent surcharge imposed on each ton of garbage disposed of at the now-closed St. Johns landfill. Today, interest generated on the fund supports Metro's grant program. Projects must directly benefit residents or neighborhoods around the facility, including Arbor Lodge, Cathedral Park, Kenton, Overlook, Portsmouth, St. Johns and University Park.

People on the ground in our neighborhoods are the best source of ideas about important public investments. Metro's process gives local residents the authority to make decisions about these community improvement grants. Local community activists from the grant target area solicit, review and award funds for neighborhood projects. Members of Metro's committee include:

- Mike Salvo (University Park)
- Chris Duffy (Arbor Lodge)
- Cece Hughley Noel (Portsmouth)
- David Davies (Overlook)
- Jeff Bissonnette (Cathedral Park)
- Robin Plance (St. Johns)
- Doretta Schrock (Kenton)

The 2010-11 grant cycle marked the 23rd year Metro has invested funds in the community through the North Portland enhancement program. In that time, more than \$2.2 million has been awarded to help fund 453 neighborhood improvement projects. Even if you haven't heard about these programs, chances are you or your neighbors have been touched by them.

This report offers highlights from some of the projects funded in 2010-11 in relation to Metro's programmatic goals (FG 1 – 9):

1. Result in increased employment/economic opportunities for North Portland residents.
2. Result in rehabilitation, upgrading or direct increase in the market value of a significant portion of the housing stock of residential land in North Portland.
3. Result in the preservation or enhancement of existing wildlife and marine areas of North Portland, or improve public awareness or opportunity to enjoy them.
4. Result in improvement to or increase in recreational areas of North Portland.
5. Result in improvement in the safety of the area of North Portland.
6. Result in an improvement of the appearance or cleanliness of the areas of North Portland.
7. Result in a significant increase in the utilization or occupancy of a North Portland commercial area.
8. Are directed to the aid of residents, non-profit corporations and small businesses as defined by the Small Business Administration.
9. Result in programs such as training opportunities to benefit North Portland youth and elderly

For more information about these or other projects, or for details about Metro’s grant resources, visit Metro’s website (www.oregonmetro.gov/grants).

Metro is proud to help inspire real change by awarding grants to support local improvements – large and small. Congratulations to our 2010-11 award recipients on project accomplishments.

There is much of which to be proud, and still much work to be done.

FUNDING GOAL 1

Result in increased employment/economic opportunities for North Portland residents

Grantee: Impact NW

Award: \$2,500

Polly Bangs is determined to reverse two troubling trends – Oregon’s statewide high school dropout rate (which has been going up) and high school graduation rate (which has been going down). With support from a Metro community enhancement grant, this social entrepreneur is using a business solution to create social change.



Seven at-risk youth from Roosevelt High School enrolled in her “Urban Opportunities” program and received job-skills training. After successfully completing training, three got entry-level jobs with the St. Johns Farmer’s Market (with stipends paid by Metro). The three-month training includes completion of an accredited curriculum which includes resume writing, mock interviews, work ethic training, financial literacy workshop, real life job search and a “hit the pavement” field trip.

FUNDING GOAL 2

Result in rehabilitation, upgrading or direct increase in the market value of a significant portion of the housing stock of residential land in North Portland.

Grantee: North Portland Tool Library

Award: \$2,250

Imagine a library that checks out tools used to make home repairs and gardening improvements...free of charge! By reducing the costs of maintaining and improving the places in which people live, work and play, the North Portland Tool Library fosters community pride. Never used a power tool before? Tired of listening to that leaky faucet? Not only does the tool library have equipment, but it also sponsors hands-on workshops to help members learn the proper and safe way to handle even the toughest job.



Metro's funds covered the salary of a tool coordinator for the equivalent to 132 hours of tool library operation. During that time period, some 1,860 members were served and 15 volunteers were trained. The volunteers accrued 175 hours performing tasks such as tool maintenance and repair, fundraising and event planning. With the Tool Coordinator providing direct services, the board of directors was able to focus on sustainable strategies for the library's future.

FUNDING GOAL 3

Result in the preservation or enhancement of existing wildlife and marine areas of North Portland, or improve public awareness or opportunity to enjoy them.

Grantee: Open Meadow Alternative School

Award: \$1,572

The guiding philosophy behind Open Meadow Alternative School is that "all students have minds of their own," and staff, including high school science teacher Eric Wergeland, are asked to "keep it that way." Using funds from Metro, students in his class got a chance to explore their world - in particular, the Columbia Slough watershed which snakes its way near the North Portland campus - and present their conclusions to fellow students, staff, family and community partners.



Students' hands-on scientific inquiry (which met State of Oregon education standards) involved training to test and submit water samples, and actual collection of data through weekly visits to the water's edge. They learned from project partner Columbia Slough Watershed Council about the history of the Slough, how it has become polluted over time, and how that impacts their lives and the community.

FUNDING GOAL 4

Result in improvement to or increase in recreational areas of North Portland.

Grantee: Sauvie Island Center

Award: \$748

Most parents would say that trying to get their kids to eat vegetables is a no-win proposition and national statistics back up their claim. According to Ohio State University researchers, only 22 percent of children in America ages two to five meet government recommendations for vegetable consumption, and it gets worse as children get older.



While helpful tips to reverse these troubling trends abound, the experience of 70 third graders from the two North Portland schools offers compelling evidence. The majority who visited Sauvie Island Center and tasted brussel sprouts and red leaf lettuce for the first time said they liked it and would try it again.

During two trips this past year, Metro's funds helped bring busloads of kids to the working farm where they tasted edibles, planted seeds and starts, dissected flowers and learned the essential role pollinators play in many of the foods they like to eat. While the jury's still out about whether these same kids will clean their rooms or turn in their homework on time, at the least they're on the right track where nutrition is concerned!

FUNDING GOAL 5

Result in improvement in the safety of the area of North Portland.

Grantee: Wings Level

Award: \$2,300

Kids and parents flock to Mark Wells like birds. Of course most remote control airplane pilots like him experience the same sort of attention, but for Wells (who works as a Crime Prevention Coordinator in North Portland), all the interest sparked an idea – create a safe and educational opportunity for kids as an alternative to risky behaviors.



Wings Level, an after-school aviators program, was launched. Using Metro grant funds, a total of 14 ninety-minute class sessions were given to eight students ranging from third to fifth grade. After learning the basic scientific principles of aerodynamics and using small, foam free-flight gliders to apply concepts such as center of gravity, thrust and drag, students got to try their hands at flying small remote control helicopters and planes. In addition, volunteer guests were brought in to offer demonstrations and instruction. The program also included a guided tour of the Portland International Airport.

FUNDING GOAL 6

Result in an improvement of the appearance or cleanliness of the areas of North Portland.

Grantee: Historic Kenton Fire House

Award: \$1,930

Imagine the treasures that might be uncovered cleaning the attic of a 97-year old firehouse - helmets, flashlights, boots, axes and more. If you were hoping to hear, “hundreds of dollars,” you won’t be disappointed. But rather than finding bundles of cash, the money discovered is in savings gained over time from super-insulating the upper reaches of the well-used community center.



In an audit conducted by the Energy Trust of Oregon, attic insulation was suggested to be the most cost-effective way to reduce the amount of oil and electricity used in the firehouse’s 1913 oil-fired boiler. Metro’s grant, along with funds from other sources, contributed to aggressive efforts to reduce the carbon output of the Kenton landmark. Along with solar photovoltaic production, electrical usage reduction plans, and reductions of hot water energy usage, the building has become a model for reduced dependency on fossil fuels. The real “treasure” revealed through the attic project is that it decreased heating and operating costs and makes the firehouse available for community building projects and programs in North Portland.

FUNDING GOAL 7

Result in a significant increase in the utilization or occupancy of a North Portland commercial area.

Grantee: St. Andrews Food Pantry

Award: \$1,050

For a third year in a row, a record number of households in Oregon sought emergency food relief, according to the biennial Hunger Factors Survey conducted by the Oregon Food Bank. The St. Andrew’s Episcopal food pantry figures prominently in helping respond to the needs of people reflected in those statistics – specifically North Portland’s working poor. The majority of clients served there are two-parent families with 3.3 children, one or two other relatives and a pet. Most adult family members work two or three part-time jobs, have lost their medical insurance, sold their car and had to move into a rental. With their income, they earn a few dollars too much to qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).



Metro’s funds were used to have a professional contractor make much needed repairs to the structure that houses the pantry – in particular, a foundation cement wall. In addition,

volunteers pitched in 100 hours scrubbing mould, sanding new dry wall, and painting the area before reinstalling window treatment, hardware and shelving.

In 2010, the pantry fed an average of 62 people in a three-hour day, or 8,989 people in total. There were nearly 500 new clients served, including 2,071 children. People were supplied with 29,209 pounds of food from the Oregon Food Bank and 1,106 pounds of food from Oregon Farmers. In addition, 41,930 pounds was collected and redistributed through monthly food drives and more than 7,000 pounds from volunteers. Donors gave 5,620 pounds of food, toiletries, household items, books and clothing.

FUNDING GOAL 8

Directed to the aid of residents, non-profit corporations and small businesses as defined by the Small Business Administration.

Grantee: Community Warehouse

Award: \$2,000

The method used by the Community Warehouse is really quite simple: collect from donors with more than they want and give to others in need. The results from this straight-forward approach are stunning – each week 65 families get essential items to turn their house into a home. Clients, from more than 90 local social service agencies, include women escaping domestic violence, the elderly, people with mental and physical disabilities, refugee families from all over the world, youth and adults recovering from substance abuse, and the working poor. A dedicated group of volunteers takes regular shifts (32,400 hours donated in 2010 alone) and a contribution from Metro ensures that warehouse operations continue seven days a week.



FUNDING GOAL 9

Result in programs such as training opportunities to benefit North Portland youth and elderly

Grantee: Bethel Neighborhood Youth Drop-In Center

Award: \$2,500

It's hard to encourage teens to work hard and reap the benefits, especially when they see their job numbers falling - by 22 percent in one recent year. Those in the next oldest age group, 19 to 21 years old, saw the second largest decline, down almost 12 percent. Even if you want to exert your independence, the battle to achieve a modicum of financial freedom may seem bleak.



Youth counselors at Bethel Neighborhood Drop-in Center have found an alternative. They're gaining a meaningful and paid job, and also becoming more aware of the impact their lives can have. Gateways open through life-changing experience when they offer friendship, guidance and positive modeling to hundreds of day camp children and their families. Pre-job training adds more for their resumes with sessions on first aid/CPR, child development, conflict resolution and working effectively and respectfully with children of diverse backgrounds. Responsible adults are made, not born, and the counselors at Bethel are honing their skills.