

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-044

Recognizing the historic significance of Walnut Park and supporting efforts of the Walnut Park Development Project in pursuing a community-based restoration approach.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- A. The County recognizes the Walnut Park area, centered around the intersection of NE Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard (MLK) and NE Killingsworth Street (Killingsworth), as a historic commercial hub of small business and an anchor point for the Black community. Walnut Park, a neighborhood in the broader Albina district, was once home to 4 out of every 5 Black families in Portland. That was no accident. Walnut Park did not have exclusionary ethnic clauses written into property deeds. Thus, Walnut Park became a vibrant and multicultural community. It was a commercial center for Northeast Portland with barber shops, beauty salons, a community-supported medical clinic, and child-first educational models created by and for Black Portlanders.
- B. The County notes the history of planning and community involvement in this area. The current approach to MLK redevelopment began in 1997 when the Portland Development Commission, now Prosper Portland, adopted the “MLK Commercial Development Strategy” and began to assemble large commercial parcels to support community-aligned redevelopment. This vision has been sustained through multiple iterations of planning: King Neighborhood Commercial Center Development Strategy (2000), MLK Boulevard Economic Development Study (2007), and the Black Investment Consortium for Economic Progress’ (BICEP) “Soul District” Plan (2018). Despite decades of planning and significant community investment, the community-aligned redevelopment of this area has stalled due to inaction by public institutions, limited resourcing, and de-prioritization.
- C. Social justice is a key Multnomah County value. The County acknowledges its commitment to inclusively lead with race, a commitment that requires ongoing accountability and action.
- D. The County owns and operates the Walnut Park Complex at the southwest corner of MLK Jr. Boulevard and Killingsworth Street. The building houses the Northeast Health Center, a dental clinic, a Meals on Wheels dining center, and the Urban League NE Senior Center. It is also home to County offices and service centers including the Department of County Human Services, the Disability and Veteran Services Division, and the Homeless Services Department shelter.
- E. Built in 1951, the Walnut Park Complex would benefit from a significant modernization or replacement to best serve County residents. This is echoed by staff and Multnomah County residents who receive services at the site.

- F. In 2018, the County evaluated future development options for the Walnut Park Complex. The process included community members, people receiving services, and staff. It culminated in the 2022 Redevelopment Feasibility Study, led by Woolley Associates LLC, BICEP, and Cascadia Partners. The conceptual plan included a mix of housing, ground-floor commercial, office space, community space, and updated and expanded county services.
- G. Since this study was completed, the County has learned more about cost and financing options. The County wishes to explore how to best partner with the community to advance this redevelopment project.
- H. The Board recognizes a unique, historic opportunity to spur development that has been decades in the making. This opportunity could also expand County financial capacity for capital projects, revitalize a County facility that is strongly supported by the people it serves, and deliver on County and community priorities for needed housing, childcare facilities, community space, and jobs.

The Board of Multnomah County Commissioners Resolves:

The Board recognizes the historic significance of Walnut Park with Portland's Black community, affirms the long-standing community-based restoration efforts, and supports the development of a proposal to redevelop Walnut Park in line with County priorities and community needs for future Board consideration.


ADOPTED this 26th day of June, 2025.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair

REVIEWED:
JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY FOR
MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By  _____
Jed Tomkins, Sr. Asst. County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair
Shannon Singleton, Commissioner, District 2.