

# Vance Properties Development Community Engagement

Final Report

March 14, 2025

## Summary

This report provides a summary of the community engagement activities conducted for the Vance Properties Development project over the last several years. This engagement was led by Verde in partnership with Cascadia Partners and Multnomah County. This engagement centered the voices of communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities who reside in the West Gresham area of the Rockwood and Centennial neighborhoods. Activities included meeting with Community Leaders, Community Conversations, project materials and Tabling Events.

Broadly, there is great interest in the future transformation of the Vance Properties. Recognition for the various zones of Vance Vision; Affordable Housing, Open/Park Space, and Employment were supported, acknowledging the benefits these areas would bring in supporting the region. Destigmatized affordable housing supporting varied cultures and family sizes was echoed by many. The need for safe gathering spaces to celebrate, share, and recreate was also raised by many. Many see the need for local opportunities for employment, commerce, and training space. Voices expressed concerns about gentrification, displacement and distrust with implementing development that truly benefits communities in the area.

Special acknowledgement to Amandeep Sohi, with Verde, and Irene Kim, with Cascadia Partners, who successfully led this community engagement.

## Key Outcomes of Engagement Activities

The following are key takeaways and outcomes from several of the activities.

Key takeaways and outcomes from Community Leader meetings:

- Community Leaders (Leaders) are excited about the redevelopment opportunities at Vance Properties and the design concept in the Vance Vision Plan
- Leaders shared concerns about who will ultimately benefit from the redevelopment and ensuring redevelopment benefits diverse communities without displacing existing residents
- Leaders shared concerns about what parts of the vision will be prioritized for implementation, and how long the redevelopment could take. Leaders felt a sense of urgency in implementing the vision and continuing to engage the neighborhood throughout redevelopment phases
- Leaders shared concerns about locating Multnomah County Animal Services on the site. This daylighted the need for more clear messaging to communities about the services provided by Animal Services and why it is being considered for relocation on Vance Properties.
- Cultural representation and placemaking, preservation of green space, community safety, accessibility, and affordability were important values expressed by Leaders when discussing the overall design concept in the Vance Vision Plan.
- Community Leaders shared their ideas about ways to engage their communities including culturally appropriate messaging and communications, engagement activities, outreach materials, and engagement formats and logistics.

### Key takeaways and outcomes from Tabling Outreach events:

- We did not collect demographic information, however, most visitors presented as people of color and limited-English speaking residents in the Rockwood neighborhood.
- We also had two Community Leader Group members and their constituents visit the tabling booth including the Eritrean and Ethiopian Cultural Resources Center (EECRC) and the Sunrise Center Kitchen.
- Many visitors were hearing about the Vance Vision Plan for the first time, and most visitors were excited for and shared positive feedback about the design concept in the Vance Vision Plan.
- We heard concerns from a few visitors about gentrification and displacement risks and distrust with implementing development that truly benefits priority communities in the area.
- We collected 26 responses when we asked visitors about what they would like to see in the redevelopment of Vance Properties. They include:
  - Playground and children's activities including traffic playgrounds and children's gardening and education
  - Water features such as splash pads and natural features like streams and ponds
  - Community Center managed by the community with educational opportunities
  - Park and open space amenities such as picnic tables, benches, barbeque stations, and covered areas for gatherings
  - Parking and accessibility including ample parking for both park visitors and future residents of a potential affordable housing development on Vance Park
  - Pet-friendly features such as an off-leash dog park
  - Sports and recreation facilities such as tennis and basketball courts

## Key Challenges and Achievements

Key challenges in this engagement was maintaining the schedule and retaining engagement with the Community Leaders and the communities. There were several times the engagement was rebalanced due to capacity, resources and sequencing the activities to support the project. Events such as an open house were determined to not align with the intent of the engagement, the team focused on the community conversations and tabling events.

Key achievements of this engagement were the Community Leader meetings and community conversation that allowed project staff to strengthen relationships and build trust with key stakeholders and residents in the Rockwood neighborhood. Keeping community members informed about the redevelopment opportunities and potential community benefits at Vance Properties. This engagement has provided more opportunities for residents to share their concerns and aspirations for their neighborhood and garner excitement for future phases of implementation.

## Report on Grant Performance Measures

The following is an outline of the grant performance measures with brief summaries and other reference documents.

1. Execution of grant IGA
  - a. Metro and Multnomah County executed the grant IGA
2. Finalize Consultant Contracts and Engagement Plan
  - a. Multnomah County executed a contract with Verde for the Community Engagement. Verde subcontracted with Cascadia Partners to support their work.
  - b. The Community Leaders advised and advocated for some modifications to the engagement scope in their initial meetings.
3. Stakeholder Outreach
  - a. This outreach was postponed due to the timing and potential confusion with the upcoming Parks/Open Space conceptual design engagement for the Vance Vision. Stakeholders are being invited to participate in this upcoming engagement.
4. Community Leader Training
  - a. The initial Community Leader meetings provided an understanding of the Vance Vision, the conditions of the existing sites, and discussions on potential future uses of the properties.
  - b. Attached Memorandum Re: Summary of Community Leader Meetings and Community Conversations (Milestones 1, 2, 4 and 5) contains additional information on the activities and their outcomes.
5. Community Tabling Events



- a. 3 Community Tabling Events occurred in the Summer of 2024. The events were hosted by Verde and Cascadia Partners.
  - b. Attached Memorandum Re: Tabling Outreach Summary (Milestone 3) contains additional information on the activities and their outcomes.
- 6. Community Conversations
  - a. 3 Community Conversations were held. These events were hosted by the Community Leaders, with Verde and Cascadia facilitating the conversations.
  - b. Attached Memorandum Re: Summary of Community Leader Meetings and Community Conversations (Milestones 1, 2, 4 and 5) contains additional information on the activities and their outcomes.
- 7. Community Conversation Summaries
  - a. 3 Community Conversations were held. These events were hosted by the Community Leaders, with Verde and Cascadia facilitating the conversations.
  - b. Attached Memorandum Re: Summary of Community Leader Meetings and Community Conversations (Milestones 1, 2, 4 and 5) contains additional information on the activities and their outcomes.
- 8. Project Completion and Final Report
  - a. This document is the Final Report

## Financial Accounting summarizing all grant-related expenses

This information will be distributed separately from this document.

## Attached Documents

- 1. Memorandum Re:Summary of Community Leader Meetings and Community Conversations (Milestones 1, 2, 4 and 5)
- 2. Memorandum Re:Tabling Outreach Summary (Milestone 3)
- 3. Vance Vision Overview - Slide Presentation for Community Conversations
- 4. Boards from Tabling Events



1022 NW Marshall St. Suite 380  
Portland, OR 97209

[www.cascadia-partners.com](http://www.cascadia-partners.com)

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Brett Taute, Project Manager, Multnomah County Facilities & Property Management  
Taylor Steenblock, Strategic Initiatives Manager, Multnomah County Department of Community Services

FROM: Irene Kim, Partner, Cascadia Partners  
Amandeep Sohi, Community Engagement Coordinator, Verde

DATE: August 8, 2024

PROJECT: Vance Properties Development Community Engagement

RE: **Summary of Community Leader Meetings and Community Conversations (Milestones 1, 2, 4 and 5)**

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## Vance Properties Development Community Engagement

This memo provides a summary of the community engagement activities conducted for the Vance Properties Development project. Over the last two years, efforts have been made to include the perspectives of local residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the planning and development process. The memo outlines the planning meetings with the Community Leader group to support with organizing Community Conversations with Rockwood residents and the outcomes of the Community Conversations. The information gathered through these activities has been used to inform the strategies and direction of the redevelopment of Vance Properties.

### Community Leader Meetings and Outcomes

Multnomah County and the consultant team held five meetings with a Community Leaders group to plan for up to four community conversations. These community conversations, hosted by Community Leaders and summarized in the following section, would gather input from underrepresented populations in the Rockwood neighborhood about the design framework proposed in the Vance Vision Plan completed in early 2022.

The goals of the Community Leader meetings were to:

- 1) Continue strengthening relationships with the leaders

- 2) Familiarize leaders with the Vance Vision Plan and design concept while providing opportunities to learn about redevelopment processes, and
- 3) Assist leaders in engaging their own communities in building awareness about future redevelopment plans at Vance Properties and gathering additional feedback

The Community Leaders represented some of the many racial and ethnic populations that reside in the west Gresham area including Latino, Eritrean and Ethiopian, African, African American, Rohingya, and Vietnamese.

Below are key takeaways and outcomes from Community Leader meetings:

- Community Leaders (Leaders) are excited about the redevelopment opportunities at Vance Properties and the design concept in the Vance Vision Plan
- Leaders shared concerns about who will ultimately benefit from the redevelopment and ensuring redevelopment benefits diverse communities without displacing existing residents
- Leaders shared concerns about what parts of the vision will be prioritized for implementation, and how long the redevelopment could take. Leaders felt a sense of urgency in implementing the vision and continuing to engage the neighborhood throughout redevelopment phases
- Leaders shared concerns about locating Multnomah County Animal Services on the site. This daylighted the need for more clear messaging to communities about the services provided by Animal Services and why it is being considered for relocation on Vance Properties.
- Cultural representation and placemaking, preservation of green space, community safety, accessibility, and affordability were important values expressed by Leaders when discussing the overall design concept in the Vance Vision Plan.
- Community Leaders shared their ideas about ways to engage their communities including culturally appropriate messaging and communications, engagement activities, outreach materials, and engagement formats and logistics.

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### Meeting 1: Community Leader Kickoff (June 2022)

Multnomah County, Verde, and Cascadia Partners reconvened with Community Leaders who participated in the Vance Vision Plan process completed in March 2022 to kick off the next phase of community engagement. Project staff provided a brief overview of the Vance Vision Plan and established the purpose and goals for community engagement in this next phase. Project staff facilitated a discussion with Leaders about what worked well in the last phase of engagement during the Vance Vision Plan process, what types of engagement they would like to see in the next phase, what organizations or groups

should be prioritized in engagement, and gathered additional contacts for Leaders that may be interested in joining the Community Leaders group. As a result, project staff were able to recruit additional Community Leaders from Arise and Shine and Rosewood Initiative.

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#### Meeting 2: Vance Properties Site Tour (July 2022)

To orient Community Leaders to the existing site and the design concept in the Vance Vision Plan and begin building relationships with new Leaders, project staff provided Leaders with an opportunity to participate in a site tour. The site tour allowed Leaders to understand the scale and existing conditions of the Vance Properties and visualize the potential development opportunities included in the plan.

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#### Meeting 3: Vance Vision Feedback (August 2022)

The site tour prompted many ideas and feedback from Community Leaders about the vision and design concepts in the plan. To make space for this discussion, project staff decided to spend the third meeting gathering their feedback and begin to discuss ideas for what the community conversations could look like.

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#### Meeting 4: Community Conversation Planning (November 2022)

The goal of the fourth meeting was to plan the Community Conversations in earnest and provide new updates related to the implementation of the redevelopment. Multnomah County staff provided updates on a potential relocation of Multnomah County's Animal Services facilities on the industrial zoned area of the site along SE 190th. This prompted many questions and concerns from Community Leaders and the majority of the meeting was spent clarifying misperceptions about the services that Animal Services provides, how it could impact redevelopment of other opportunities on the site, and how it could benefit communities. Some leaders expressed concerns and questions about prioritizing the needs of animals over community needs and that this would be a similar concern from immigrant and refugee communities as well. These concerns emphasized the need for better community education about Animal Services if the County decides to relocate to Vance Properties and how it can benefit communities without having to trade off the needs of communities such as affordable housing and other amenities and services.

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#### Meeting 5: Community Conversation Planning (January 2023)

Multnomah County, Verde, and Cascadia Partners met for a fifth and final meeting to create an agenda for the community conversations, develop questions to gather feedback, and determine the format, logistics, and materials needed for the

conversations. Leaders decided it would be appropriate to hold up to four meetings with BIPOC and language-specific residents in Rockwood and requested outreach materials to help recruit residents to the community conversations.

## **Community Conversations and Outcomes**

After several community conversation planning sessions where Cascadia Partners, Verde and Multnomah County worked in collaboration with leaders, we determined that a refreshed one-pager about the Vance site for Community Conversation attendees would be helpful to help orient them to the project and the efforts thus far. Leaders decided to organize themselves and hold 4 community conversations reaching the:

1. Ethiopian and Eritrean community (via the Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural and Resource Center)
2. The Latinx community
3. The Black and African American and Asian-American community
4. The West African immigrant and refugee community (via non-profit organization Arise and Shine)

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### **Community Conversation 1: EECRC**

Held February 11, 2023 at the Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural Resource Center with approximately 15 attendees representing both the Amharic and Tigrinya language groups from this region. The community leader that facilitated this discussion was able to assist Cascadia Partners in interpreting the information to the community who had varying degrees of English proficiency.

This event yielded many questions and insights from the community, including the desire for a Rockwood-wide community center that all Rockwood community members could utilize for gatherings or event spaces that could accommodate large groups for events, and that could potentially generate revenue to help support any programs that might occur at the space that benefit the community.

One participant commented on the project scope, and the potential for the park to become a magnet for visitors from across the region, with concerns for what parking may look like. This participant mentioned that parking is already very limited for the Vance as it currently stands and the fact it is much smaller in size. This comment led to others wondering how this issue may be impacted by the potential for affordable housing, and where families living there may be expected to park.



*Images from Community Conversation 1: EECRC*

## Community Conversation 2: Latinx Community

Held on March 17, 2023 at Lynchwood Christian Church with approximately 15 attendees, this event brought together communities from the Latinx community to discuss the



Vance Project. For this event, the presentation was conducted in English, and interpreted into Spanish via a dedicated interpreter. Leaders involved in the event planning facilitated small group discussions with attendees, and were able to answer some questions based on their own knowledge and experience with the project.

Similar to the previous Conversation, many questions and conversation topics emerged, including safety in the park. Many people were concerned about lighting in the park, and said that ample lighting would make them feel safe utilizing the park, especially during the fall and winter months when it becomes dark earlier in the day. Safety was also talked about in terms of street improvements, as there is currently only one pedestrian crossing to access Vance Park across 182nd.,





*Images from Community Conversation 2: Latinx Community*

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### Community Conversation 3: Multicultural Community Event

Held on July 13, 2023 at Gresham High School with approximately 15 attendees, this event brought together community representatives from the Black and African-American, Asian American, and Rohingya immigrant and refugee communities.

Much like the previous two Community Conversations, there was a very lively discussion around many aspects of the Vance project. One topic that we spent a significant amount of time discussing was the potential for internships, jobs, and workforce development along the commercial/industrially zoned corridor of 190th. Several of the attendees at this discussion group were students at Gresham High School, and raised concerns about the the job market, and wondered what internship opportunities could look like at the potential animal shelter, pointing out that volunteer opportunities are great for some, but young adults could benefit from internships that could help drive their careers. They also mentioned that if commercial spaces are built, what small-business incubation spaces could look like for artisans and creators in Rockwood to have a shop or studio space.

Many in the room had connections to PPS' SUN program, and wondered if there were opportunities to collaborate with nearby schools, or with program coordinators to develop new programming for Vance Park and nearby residents within the Park, or should a community center be constructed.



*Image from Community Conversation 3: Multicultural Community Event*

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#### Community Conversation 4: West African Immigrant and Refugee Community

While this event was originally planned for March, due to several unfortunate events and postponements (related to weather, bereavement, and capacity), we were unable to coordinate a meeting with this group. We will be updating all of the leaders with a summary of this phase of engagement, and will include the leaders we were working with in engaging this community in that update.

#### Conclusion

The feedback from Community Leaders and community conversations will inform the next phases of planning and implementation for Vance Properties including the upcoming Parks Planning project in the Fall for the parks and recreation area identified in the Vance Vision Plan. Project staff anticipates reconvening Community Leaders in the parks planning process to continue support with engagement and outreach.

The Community Leader meetings and community conversation have allowed project staff to strengthen relationships and build trust with key stakeholders and residents in the Rockwood neighborhood and keep community members informed about the redevelopment opportunities and potential community benefits at Vance Properties. This engagement has provided more opportunities for residents to share their concerns and

aspirations for their neighborhood and garner excitement for future phases of implementation.



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Brett Taute, Project Manager, Multnomah County Facilities & Property Management  
Taylor Steenblock, Strategic Initiatives Manager, Multnomah County Department of Community Services

**FROM:** Irene Kim, Partner, Cascadia Partners

**DATE:** August 30, 2024

**PROJECT:** Vance Properties Development Community Engagement

**RE:** **Tabling Outreach Summary (Milestone 3)**

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### Vance Properties Development Community Engagement

The memo outlines three tabling outreach events conducted in Rockwood to build awareness about the Vance Vision Plan and the upcoming planning efforts anticipated by Multnomah County and to gather general feedback about the 2022 Vance Vision Plan. The information gathered through these activities has been used to inform the strategies and direction of the redevelopment of Vance Properties.

#### Tabling Outreach Events in Rockwood

The consultant team was able to coordinate tabling opportunities with Play Grow Learn at the Juneteenth event and the People's Market which occurs every Sunday for 20 weeks starting June 23. The tabling events took place on the following dates and times:

- **Juneteenth event:** June 19, 2024, 12-6PM, Vance Park
- **People's Market:** July 14 and 23, 2024, 1-5PM, East Multnomah County Courthouse

The consultant team produced display boards and fact sheets with information about the Vance Vision Plan including design concept for Vance Properties and upcoming planning efforts to implement the plan. The team also collected contact information from residents interested in signing up to the project's email list. Over 100 people are estimated to have visited the tabling booth and the team collected general feedback and reactions to the design concept for Vance Properties.

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### Key takeaways and outcomes

- We did not collect demographic information, however, most visitors presented as people of color and limited-English speaking residents in the Rockwood neighborhood.
- We also had two Community Leader Group members and their constituents visit the tabling booth including the Eritrean and Ethiopian Cultural Resources Center (EECRC) and the Sunrise Center Kitchen.
- Many visitors were hearing about the Vance Vision Plan for the first time, and most visitors were excited for and shared positive feedback about the design concept in the Vance Vision Plan.
- We heard concerns from a few visitors about gentrification and displacement risks and distrust with implementing development that truly benefits priority communities in the area.
- We collected 26 responses when we asked visitors about what they would like to see in the redevelopment of Vance Properties. They include:
  - **Playground and children's activities** including traffic playgrounds and children's gardening and education
  - **Water features** such as splash pads and natural features like streams and ponds
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  - **Park and open space amenities** such as picnic tables, benches, barbeque stations, and covered areas for gatherings
  - **Parking and accessibility** including ample parking for both park visitors and future residents of a potential affordable housing development on Vance Park
  - **Pet-friendly features** such as an off-leash dog park
  - **Sports and recreation facilities** such as tennis and basketball courts

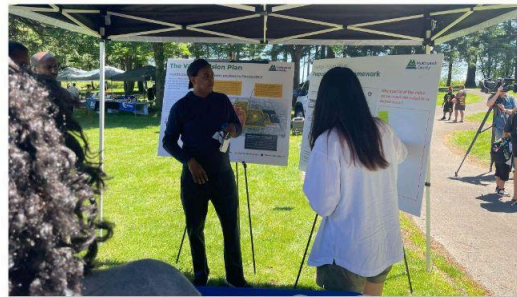
### Conclusion

The feedback from the tabling outreach events will inform the next phases of planning and implementation for Vance Properties including the upcoming Parks Planning project in the Fall for the parks and recreation area identified in the Vance Vision Plan. This engagement has built more awareness and education about the redevelopment opportunities at Vance Properties and has garnered excitement for future phases of implementation.



## Appendix

Below are images from the tabling outreach events.



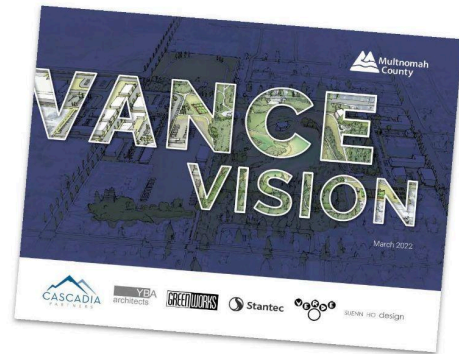


## Vance Vision Plan

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### Background Information

February 2022



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## What Vance site looks like today



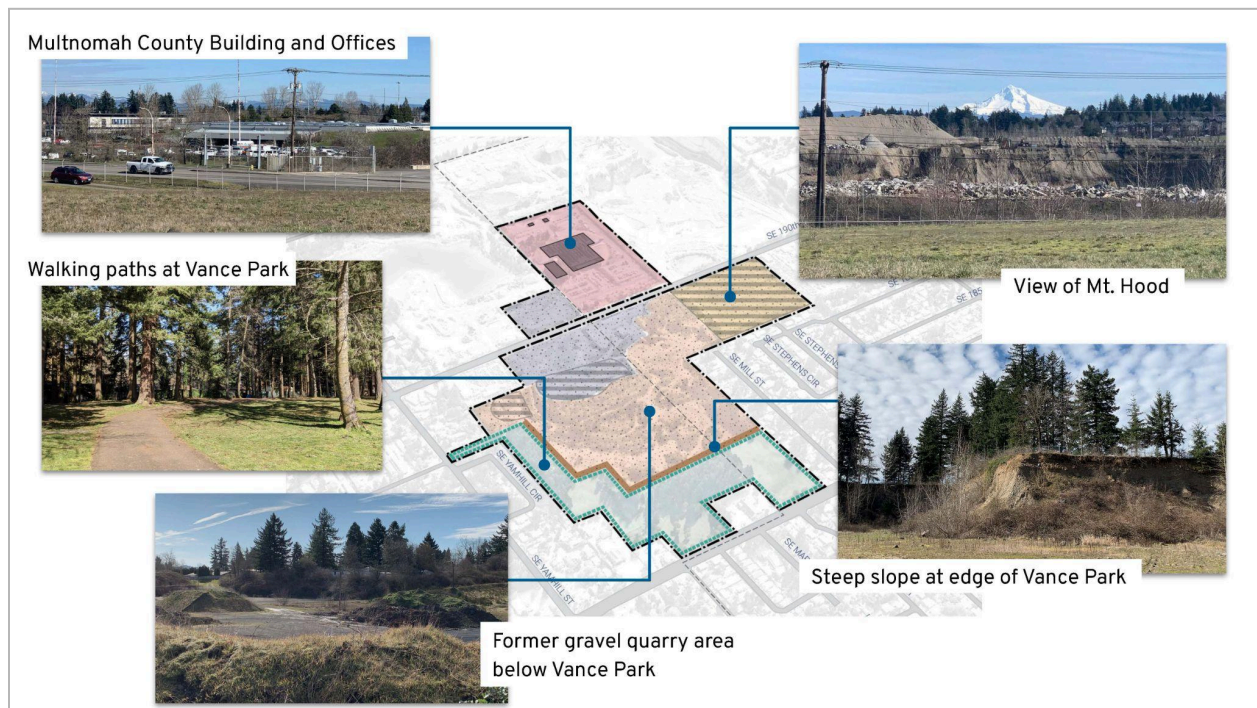
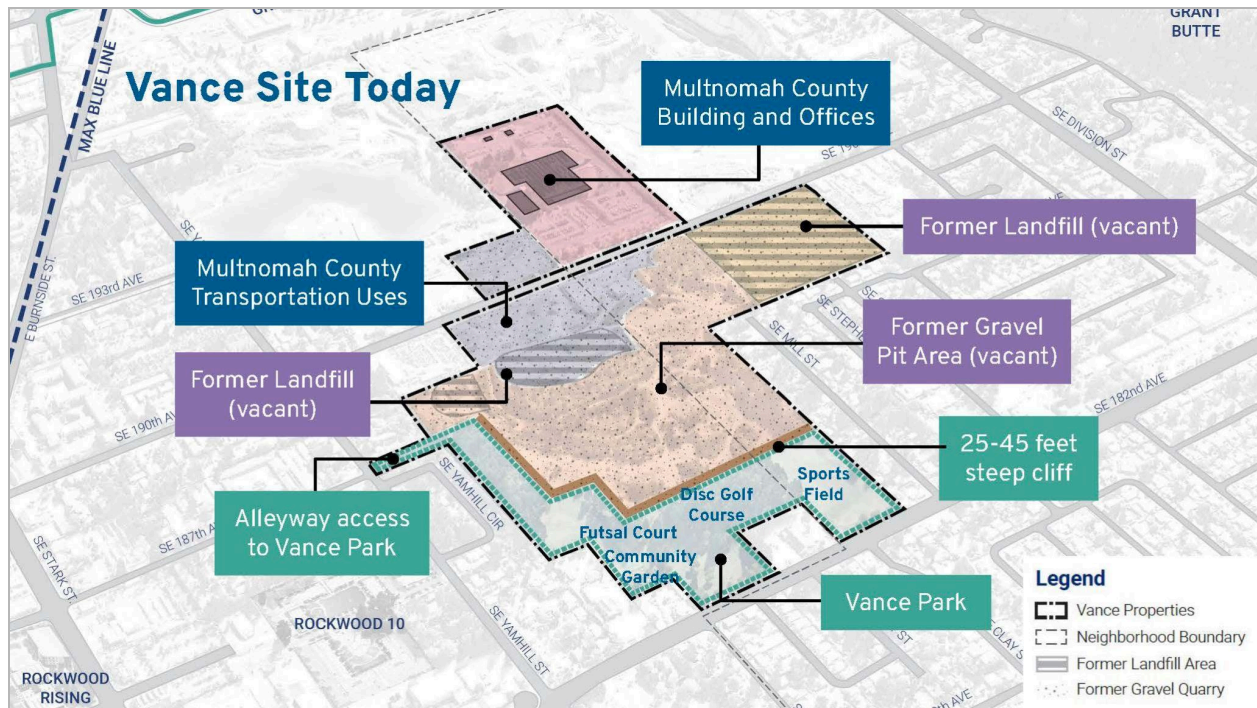
- Located between SE Stark and Division Street between 182nd and 190th Ave.
- 87 acre site (about 50 soccer fields)
- Property is owned by Multnomah County

[illegible]

**A once in a generation opportunity.**

- **Affordable housing**
- **Parks and open spaces**
- **Sports fields and recreation**
- **Job opportunities and businesses**
- **Multnomah County Animal Shelter**
- **Community gathering spaces**
- **Cultural events and programs**
- **Safe walking and biking trails**





## What we heard from the community

Community Surveys  
Summer 2020 - Spring 2021

### What do you feel are the top community priorities for the neighborhood?



Safe and affordable housing  
(rent and own)



Access to parks, open  
space, and nature



Recreational areas for  
sports and play



Safe access to the Vance  
site for walking and biking



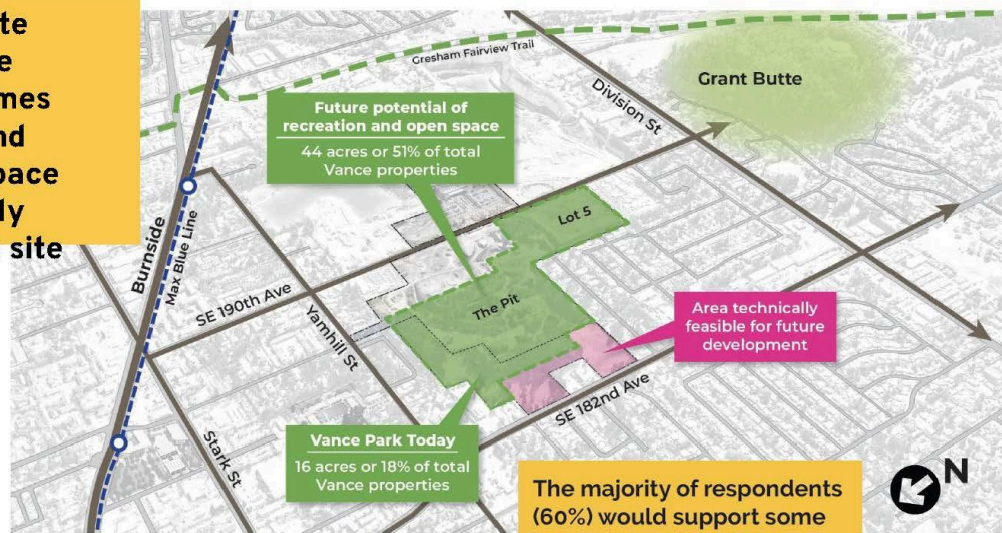
More job opportunities and  
job training



Affordable childcare



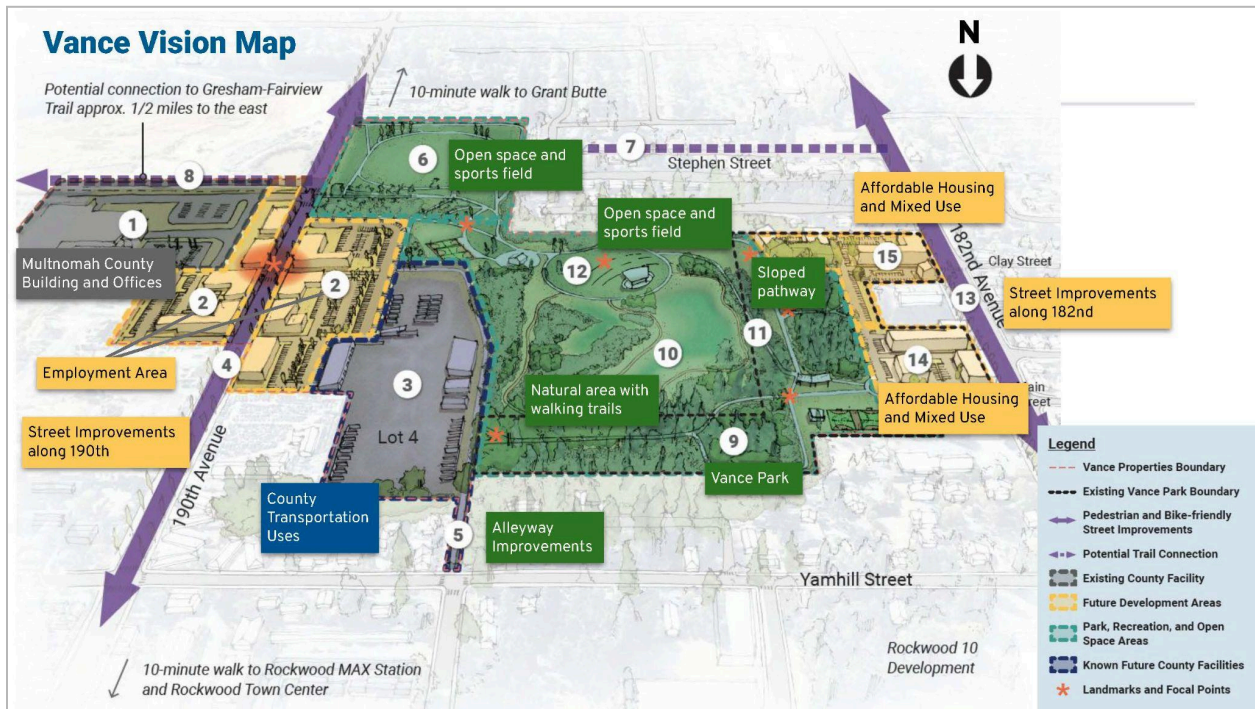
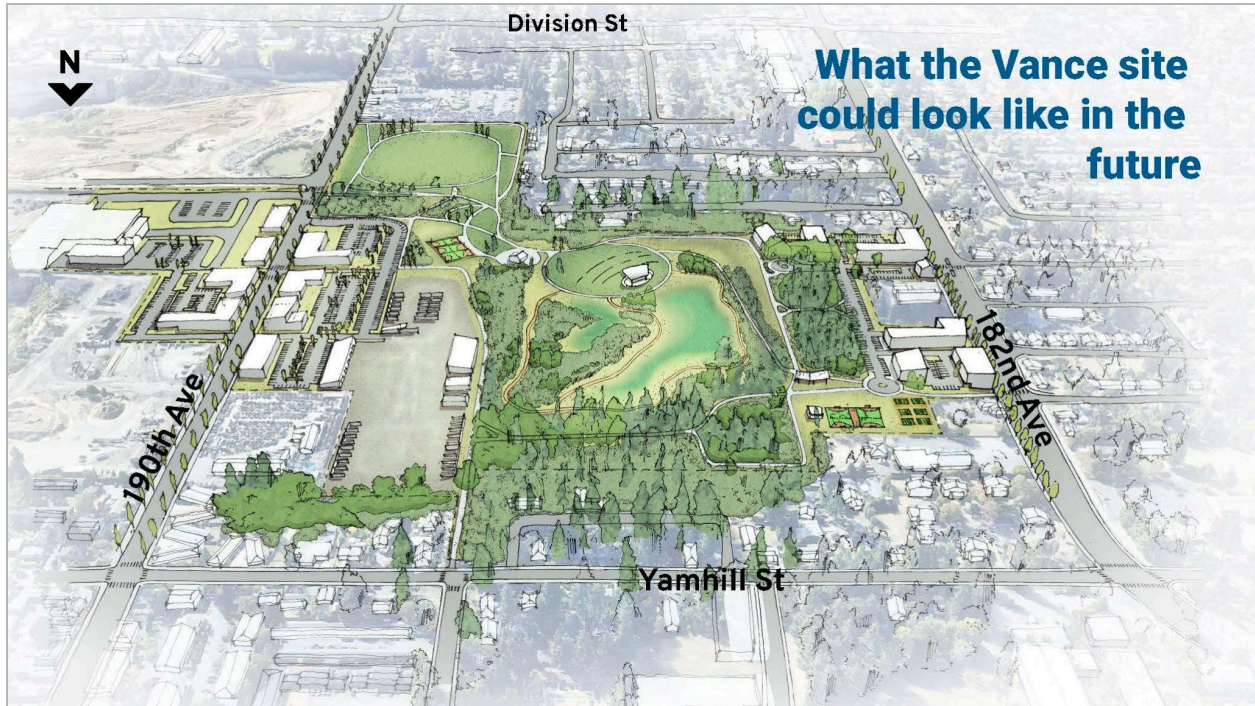
The Vance site could provide nearly 2.5 times more park and recreation space than currently exists on the site today.



The majority of respondents (60%) would support some type of development in Vance Park - if parks and open space is expanded and enhanced in other areas.

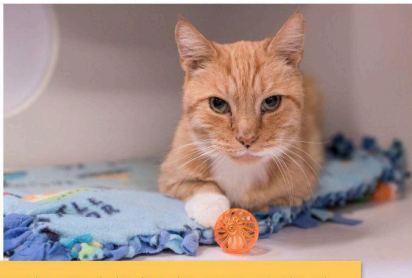
## Vance Properties Vision





## What are the next steps in the planning and design process?

- **Parks and Open Space Planning**
  - Understand if environmental challenges on the site can support a park and how including ways to manage stormwater
  - More community engagement
  - Begins Summer/Fall 2023
- **New Animal Services Building**
  - Potential location along 190th but also looking elsewhere - not decided
  - Very early phase of planning - County has defined space needs and size of building
- **Ongoing maintenance and management of the property** including former landfill areas to ensure public safety



Planning and design for a new Animal Shelter building is currently underway. Construction could happen in 2026-27. No decision on location.



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## What does Animal Services do?

- Lost and found services
- Adoption services
- Humane shelter
- Veterinary care
- 24-hour response to animal emergencies and public safety incidents involving animals
- Licensing for dogs, cats and animal facilities
- Education and enforcement of the community's responsible pet ownership laws
- Investigate animal abuse & neglect and potentially dangerous dogs
- Help neighborhoods resolve animal nuisance disputes

## Next Steps

- **More Community Conversation events** with other cultural and language-specific communities
- **Community-wide Open House** event in May/June 2023
  - Share what we heard and gather more ideas and feedback from larger Rockwood community
  - We will send out invites for the event!
- **Feedback will be incorporated into Parks and Open Space Planning** and shared with County leaders



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## Questions?



# The Vance Vision Plan



## About the Project

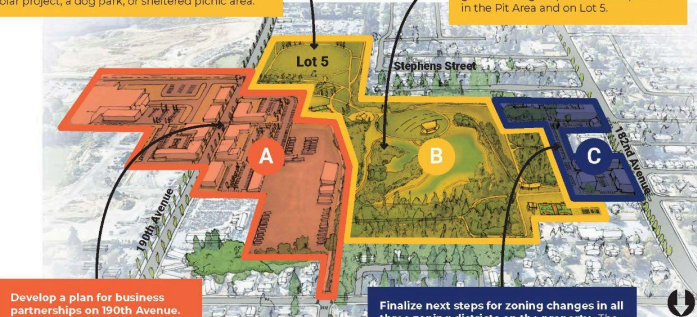
The Vance Vision Plan is a conceptual plan for the future use of Multnomah County's 90-acre Vance properties in west Gresham's Rockwood/Centennial neighborhood.

The Vance Vision Plan was completed in March 2022 and incorporates feedback from a 2-year long planning and engagement process with neighborhood residents. There are many milestones ahead to build Vance's vision into a reality; however, the County is working towards several key planning efforts this year to move the development process forward.

## Current and Upcoming Planning Efforts

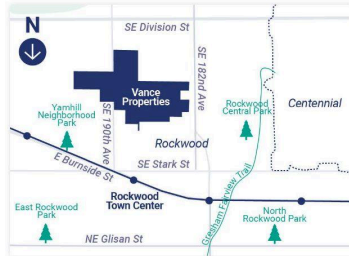
**Explore other community benefits on Lot 5.** Lot 5 is a former landfill. The Vance Vision Plan allocates open greenspace to Lot 5 once it is safe to use for people, plants, and animals, but Multnomah County is open to exploring other possible uses for Lot 5 to maximize community value beyond greenspace. This could include something like a community solar project, a dog park, or sheltered picnic area.

**Complete the Park Conceptual Design for the Pit Area.** Multnomah County is partnering with Greenworks to prepare a Park Conceptual Design and will initiate discussions regarding potential grant funding for park redevelopment in the Pit Area and on Lot 5.



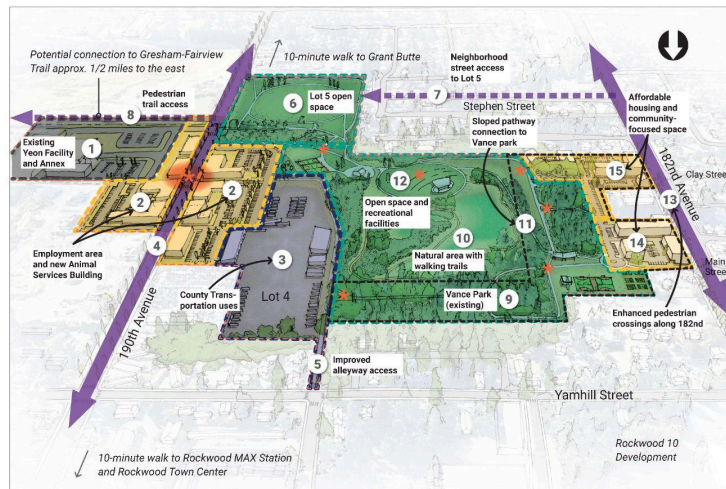
**Develop a plan for business partnerships on 190th Avenue.** Small BIPOC-owned businesses, entrepreneurship, and workforce development opportunities was a priority for community members during the Vance Vision process.

**Finalize next steps for zoning changes in all three zoning districts on the property.** The Vance property will require zoning changes to allow certain uses detailed in the vision and desired by the community such as higher density affordable housing or parks and open space. The county will be conducting a zoning study to implement these changes.



**A 190th Employment Corridor B The Park, the Pit + Slope C 182nd Corridor Site 1 + 2**

## Vance Vision Plan Proposed Design Framework



Which part(s) of the vision are you most interested in or excited about?

ADD STICKY NOTES HERE

- Vance Properties Boundary
- Existing Vance Park Boundary
- Pedestrian and Bike-friendly Street Improvements
- Potential Trail Connection
- Existing County Facility
- Future Development Areas
- Park, Recreation, and Open Space Areas
- Known Future County Facilities
- Landmarks and Focal Points