

Vancouver, WA Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant Public Involvement Plan

January 2021

INTRODUCTION

The City of Vancouver, in partnership with the Clark County Public Health Department and Vancouver Housing Authority, has been awarded a \$600,000 Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Through implementation of this grant, these three agencies (the Coalition) will work together to further local subarea revitalization, economic development, environmental protection, and housing goals.

This project will primarily focus on assessments in the Fourth Plain target area in central Vancouver but could also include other potential sites in other areas of the City and throughout Clark County. The Fourth Plain target area includes an area around an approximately five mile stretch of Fourth Plain Boulevard between I-5 and I-205. The project intends to achieve the following:

- Update and expand the City's brownfields site inventory to include the expanded Clark County geography (the original was completed with a 2013 EPA Brownfields Community-Wide Assessment Grant and only addresses City of Vancouver brownfields sites)
- Conduct at least 15 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), evenly divided between petroleum and hazardous substance sites (10 ESAs to be included in the Fourth Plain target area)
- Conduct at least 12 Phase II ESAs, evenly divided between petroleum and hazardous substance sites (8 ESAs to be included in the Fourth Plain target area)
- Prepare Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCAs) at one hazardous substance site and one petroleum site
- Develop an Area-Wide Plan (AWP) and a Final Cleanup Plan for up to two brownfield impacted areas, potentially including real estate market analysis, infrastructure assessment, conceptual reuse planning and design, and targeted community outreach and engagement

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS

Implementation of the grant will be a three-year, multi-step process. The Coalition intends for this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) to provide the framework for an inclusive and equitable outreach strategy on the project elements listed above. The goals of this PIP include:

- Offer culturally appropriate and equitable means of participating in the community engagement process, especially for community members most vulnerable to the negative effects of brownfield sites, such as communities of color and households in poverty.
- Provide educational opportunities for residents, business owners, and property owners to better understand land reuse and redevelopment of brownfield sites and the brownfield

program's role in that process, as well as give them the opportunity to suggest potential sites for brownfield assessments in the Target Area.

- Provide opportunities for residents, business owners, and property owners to provide input on remediation and conceptual plans for identified catalyst sites in the Target Area.
- Create outreach activities designed to leverage existing relationships and create new partnerships among stakeholder groups and local community members.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Vancouver is a city of approximately 189,000 persons located within Clark County, which has a population of almost 500,000 persons and the second highest population density of all counties in Washington. The Brownfields project will include all of Clark County, but will focus on the Fourth Plain target area roughly between the Interstate 5 and 205 freeways in central Vancouver.

The Fourth Plain target area is one of the most diverse communities in Vancouver and Clark County with many culturally specific businesses that serve the local community. The community has suffered from historic lack of investment and resources, causing it to have higher rates of unemployment, poverty, limited English language proficiency, and severely rent burdened households as compared with the city and county overall. The Fourth Plain Corridor also includes many of the area's most impacted communities in terms of environmental health disparities, environmental exposure, and sensitive populations. Communities residing within the target area suffer from a greater-than-normal incidence of chronic diseases and conditions that may be associated with exposure to hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or petroleum.

To address disparities listed above, the City created the Fourth Plain Forward Initiative focused on bringing resources to the Fourth Plain area to improve housing and economic security and increase opportunities for residents and businesses. The Fourth Plain Coalition, of which all three of the Brownfields Grant Coalition partners are members, was co-created by the City of Vancouver and Clark County Public Health to concentrate resources within the Fourth Plain target area. The Brownfields project is an extension of this work in the Fourth Plain community, and project staff will leverage the partnerships made through the Fourth Plain Coalition to ensure the outreach process is as equitable and beneficial to the target area as possible.

PROJECT STAFF

City Staff

- Cayla Cothron, Associate Long Range Planner, City of Vancouver Community and Economic Development Department, cayla.cothron@cityofvancouver.us, 360-487-7899. Cayla will co-manage all grant implementation activities on a day-to-day basis, including technical oversight of assessment-related activities.
- Shannon Williams, Associate Community Development Planner, City of Vancouver Community and Economic Development Department, shannon.williams@cityofvancouver.us,

360-487-7896. Shannon will co-manage all grant implementation activities on a day-to-day basis, including technical oversight of assessment-related activities.

- Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, City of Vancouver Community and Economic Development Department, bryan.snodgrass@cityofvancouver.us, 360-487-7946. Bryan will serve in an advisory role to project staff.

County Staff

- Bryan DeDoncker, Environmental Health Specialist II, Clark County Public Health Department Hazard Assessment Program, Bryan.DeDoncker@clark.wa.gov, 564-397-8153. Bryan will oversee Clark County grant implementation activities including completion of hazard assessments and provide technical assistance and guidance to the project team.
- Melissa Martin, MPH, Clark County Public Health Chronic Disease Prevention Program Manager, Melissa.Martin@clark.wa.gov, 360-869-8553. Melissa will provide guidance on the public health implications of grant activities.

VHA Staff

- Josh Ollinger, Vancouver Housing Authority Development Project Manager, jollinger@vhausa.com, 360-993-9578. Victor will oversee VHA grant implementation activities.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Public involvement activities will be ongoing throughout the three-year project duration. Brief descriptions of each activity will be provided below, as well as the approximate timing of each activity. Given the impact of COVID-19 on public gatherings, the project team will host the public involvement activities online until it is deemed safe to do otherwise according to state and local laws and guidelines. The project team acknowledges this will make it harder for community members without reliable access to computers and/or internet access to engage, and the Coalition will do everything possible to mitigate these barriers.

Stakeholders

The following organizations provided letters in support of the City's Brownfields Coalition grant application and will be updated and consulted with on the project as needed:

- Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC)
- Evergreen Habitat for Humanity
- Fourth Plain Forward
- Port of Vancouver
- Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
- Washington State University (WSU) Clark County Extension

The project team will update and consult with the stakeholders listed above in addition to other organizations that express interest during project outreach.

Brownfields Advisory Committee

The project team will convene a Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) to provide more in-depth and regular input on site inventory prioritization, Environmental Assessments (ESAs) property selection, area-wide planning, and final clean-up plans. The BAC may include representatives from City and County departments, government partners, community organizations, property owners, industry advisors/experts, and representatives from the general public. The BAC will meet several times over the course of the project term, with a minimum of one meeting per year, to occur at key milestones in the project. Strong representation from the Fourth Plain target area will be present on the BAC through engagement with the Fourth Plain Coalition, Fourth Plain Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and the larger Fourth Plain community.

Other Public Involvement Tools

Community Open Houses

The City plans on hosting two open houses for the Brownfields project.

- The first open house will occur early in the project to provide background information on the Brownfield program in Clark County and the Fourth Plain target area. This open house will focus on the site inventory and Phase I and II ESAs and provide the community an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.
- The second open house will provide a general project update and will focus on upcoming activities around the Area-Wide Plan (AWP) and clean-up plans for up to two brownfield sites.

Community Meetings

Community meetings will focus on the Fourth Plain target area and utilize the existing social infrastructure within the Fourth Plain Coalition. In addition to presenting to at least one of the twice-yearly Fourth Plain Coalition meetings, the project team will also present to the Fourth Plain CAC to ensure community voices are being heard throughout the process. These meetings will be used to keep stakeholders informed on the project as well as to engage them on site prioritization and area-wide planning activities, potentially including conceptual reuse planning and design within the target area.

Project Materials

Project materials will be kept up to date as project milestones are met and will be made available in at least English, Spanish, Russian and Chuukese, the most common languages spoken in the Fourth Plain target area. All project materials below that are noted as available on the project website will also be available in hard copy upon request to the project team.

- **Fact sheet** with information on the goals and objectives of the Brownfields project, partner information, timelines, etc. that will be kept up to date as the project progresses

- **Press Releases** to local media outlets at the outset of the project and in advance of community-wide outreach events
- **Project website** that includes updated information and all project materials
- **Newsletters and email blasts** that provide people who have signed up for project updates a way to stay informed throughout the duration of the project about milestones and upcoming engagement opportunities
- **Postcards** or other mailed notices may be sent to residents, businesses, and property owners to increase community awareness of outreach events
- **A site nomination form** will be made available on the project website for the general public to notify the project team of potential brownfields sites
- **Educational materials** will be made available on the project website to help teach the community about the brownfield assessment process and project in general

Timeline

