



CITY OF VANCOUVER Newsletter

A QUARTERLY NEWS UPDATE FOR THE COMMUNITY

FEBRUARY 2024 | VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 1

Safe Stay Communities: Positive Impact Felt in Neighborhoods

The City is continually working to address homelessness in our community. Last November, the City declared a homeless emergency in Vancouver to help expand and expedite the City's response to the growth in complexity and magnitude of the crisis through City initiatives such as its Homeless Assistance and Resources Team (HART) and its Safe Stay Community Program.

The four Safe Stay Communities currently in operation are a vital part of our Homelessness Response Plan.

The locations were chosen based on City Council-approved site selection criteria which includes placing Safe Stay Communities equitably throughout the city, availability of public transit and acute need resulting from nearby camping. All sites provide shelter and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, offering residents greater access to services and increased stability as they work to exit homelessness. The sites also help address the immediate impacts of homelessness on community health, safety and cleanliness, including removal of garbage, trash and clutter in public spaces and relocation of



The Safe Stay Community at 4611 Main St. opened on Dec. 15, 2023. The community provides 20 modular shelters serving up to 40 people.

residents living in tents or vehicles in public rights of way.

The model is working

Since opening, the communities have served more than 240 people, helped more than 50 residents gain employment and placed more than 80 individuals in stable housing.

The positive impact of the Safe Stay Communities is also being felt and seen by those who live nearby. North Image Neighborhood Association treasurer Margot Rice lives near the Safe Stay Community at 11400 N.E. 51st Circle. During its first six months of operation, the area experienced a 30% reduction in police calls and officer-

initiated visits within a 500 ft radius of the community and a 9.6% reduction in Fire/EMS calls to the community address compared to the same address one year earlier. She says neighborhoods should not fear having a Safe Stay Community nearby.

"I am happy to say that Safe Stay has been a success. Before, there was a huge homeless camp at the site which had the usual problems. The homeless camp even affected the nearby YMCA membership and people didn't feel safe going to the Y," Rice said. "The safe stay community is well-managed and rules are enforced. Petty crime is down, and you don't have to worry about fire danger during the dry season from the homeless camp."

Vancouver's Downtown Association also notes neighborhood improvements since the Safe Stay Community at 415 W. 11th St. opened last November.

"The VDA has observed a noticeable reduction in homeless-related littering and outdoor camping in downtown," said Michael Walker, Executive Director, VDA. "This momentum is a catalyst for keeping downtown clean, safe and inviting."



Volunteers helped assemble storage sheds for Safe Stay 4 in December.

Emergency Declaration Update

Bridge Shelter Update

A Bridge Shelter is a low-barrier site where those experiencing homelessness can have a place to stay as they "bridge" the space between living outside and the next step on their journey to permanent housing.

No site has been identified but ideally a future shelter would be located on a transit line, near services, and on a large parcel of land that can accommodate 100-150 beds, dining area, community space, a warming kitchen, and bathroom facilities. To help with critical needs of those seeking help, the shelter will also include 20-25 medical respite beds, substance use services/medication assisted treatment, and peer recovery support.

The City is looking at a tension fabric structure to house the shelter as it offers the conveniences of power, climate control, weather protection, and the ability to build it faster than constructing a traditional shelter or repurposing an existing building.

Once a location is identified, we will host community information sessions to keep neighbors informed and collect community feedback.

To learn more about the emergency declaration and read the monthly status reports, scan the QR code.



The City of Vancouver newsletter is published quarterly for residents and those who receive services from the City.

Questions, comments and suggestions can be sent to Laura Shepard at laura.shepard@cityofvancouver.us.

The information is current as of the publication date. Visit cityofvancouver.us to verify meeting dates and status of events.

Scan the QR code for translations in Español, Русский, Tiếng Việt and 中国人.



City of Vancouver Washington
415 W. 6th Street
Vancouver, WA 98660-1995

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Officer **Tyler Chavers**, left, with VPD Corporal **Sean Metevia**. Metevia will take over Officer Chavers' role on the HART team when Chavers retires in March. Recruitment is open for a second HART officer.

Vancouver Police Department transitions staffing on HART team

Officer Tyler Chavers joined the Vancouver Police Department in 2004 and was the first officer assigned to the City's Homeless Assistance and Resources Team (HART).

In March, Officer Chavers will be retiring after nearly 27 years working in law enforcement. He shares that being on the HART team has been the most rewarding part of his career—seeing many previously-unhoused residents seek treatment, enter transitional housing and reunite with family.

VPD Corporal Sean Metevia recently joined HART as its newest member. Officer Metevia started at VPD in 2018 and has been a Neighborhood Police Officer for the past four years. Metevia looks forward to working with the officers and outreach teams that HART works with to decrease barriers for unhoused community members.

Learn how to contact the HART team and report concerns. Scan the QR code or visit cityofvancouver.us/hart.



Reimagining Our City's Future with OUR VANCOUVER

What types of community spaces do you want more of in your neighborhood?

How will your housing needs change between now and 2045?

What are the most important issues in your neighborhood that affect community health and well-being?

These are just a few of the key questions we are asking community members (you) as we create **OUR VANCOUVER**—the City's plan for managing growth and development, investing in infrastructure, and protecting the natural environment over the next 20 years.

Our Future

The City's comprehensive plan (Our Vancouver) is one of our community's most important tools to help plan for our future. Since the plan was last updated in 2011, we've experienced significant growth, as well as demographic, economic and social changes.

Vancouver, WA 2010 to 2023



Our Vision

The comprehensive plan establishes a vision for our city as well as goals and policies for housing, transportation, parks, economic opportunities, and more. Since June 2022, hundreds of community members contributed to crafting our **vision statement**:

Vancouver is an equitable and prosperous community, which ensures that all residents, businesses and organizations benefit from the growth and advancement we make together. Vancouver will be recognized for our quality of life, as evidenced by affordable housing in vibrant, safe and walkable neighborhoods, access to jobs and economic opportunity for all, and leading-edge efforts to address climate change.

Get Involved!

The next step in creating Our Vancouver is to generate "land use alternatives"—maps of options for what we want future land use and development to look like and how we will advance our shared vision. **Take the community survey to help us learn about your neighborhood.**



360-946-3514 | ourvancouver2045@cityofvancouver.us
beheardvancouver.org/plan2045

Fit, fun and young at heart

Building meaningful friendships is difficult but many older adults are finding it a little easier thanks to Firstenburg and Marshall community centers and Vancouver's 50 and Better recreation programs.



friends, "We get together after Zumba to relax over coffee. It's a good time to catch up outside class."

The City's 50 and Better program offers clubs, hiking groups and social dances for all seniors.

Community centers offer discounted senior memberships for the fitness centers, pools, gyms and group exercise classes. Seniors may even qualify for a free membership through insurance-based programs.



Debbie Gorham and her husband joined Firstenburg in 2021, persuaded by the senior fitness classes and indoor track. Debbie began fitness classes to improve her balance, and discovered her classmates soon became friends. "There are many opportunities to laugh and have fun with people working toward the goal of staying active as they age."

Outside a chair fitness class, Firstenburg member Marianne is laughing with classmates, "I don't know if we come every week for the fitness or the friends."



In the Trapadero senior lounge, people are playing cards and preparing for an afternoon craft club. Lillian Hashimoto is there with

Explore senior recreation opportunities near you at cityofvancouver.us/community-centers.



Renderings of the Columbia Lancaster (left) and Van Vleet playground replacements (above).

Slide into spring break at new playgrounds

New playgrounds are coming to two central Vancouver parks in March. Installed in 1994, playgrounds at Columbia Lancaster Park (6000 Idaho St.) and Van Vleet Park (Flint Ave. and Topeka Lane) were ready for an update after 30 years of play. Neighbors who live nearby helped choose the playground themes and equipment through surveys and pop-up open house events.

Located in the Northcrest neighborhood, the new playground at Columbia Lancaster Park has a science, technology, engineering and math

(STEM) theme. The brightly colored design includes a unique climbing wall, interactive electronic game panels, musical instruments, slides, swings and a spinning climber.

The new playground at Van Vleet Park in the Northwood neighborhood is forest critter themed. It features nature-inspired equipment with leaves, sprouts, rocks, logs and petals. Bear cub and beaver play statues will spark imagination as kids explore a variety of climbers, slides, swings and spinners.

Learn more at cityofvancouver.us/parks.

Contractors: help us rehab and preserve housing in Vancouver

The Housing Rehabilitation Program works to preserve the existing housing supply in Vancouver. We're looking for qualified general contractors, plumbers, electricians and other trades to bid on and perform work for the program. Contractors can see if they are qualified by visiting the Housing Rehabilitation Program at cityofvancouver.us/housingrehab or by contacting justin.ventura@cityofvancouver.us.



Housing Rehabilitation Program house before (above) and after renovation (below).



Putting home ownership within reach for some first time home buyers

In partnership with the Vancouver Housing Authority, Habitat for Humanity, Native American Youth and Family Center, and Proud Ground, Vancouver is supporting the launch of a new homeownership program for households earning low to moderate income (up to \$90,200 for a family of four). The partnership was created to help address the challenges of entering the housing market for the first time, including a shortage of affordable housing options for households earning less than 80% of the area's median income.

Program partners are offering homeownership counseling and down payment assistance to purchase newly constructed homes. To learn more and start the process, visit ccahp.org.



Rendering of the new Main Street

Main Street makeover ahead

After a year filled with sharing project details and seeking your feedback we're ready to fulfill the Main Street Promise of a more welcoming, safe, and vibrant Main Street. Outreach included:

- More than 20 City and community boards and commissions meetings
- 5 project advisory group meetings
- 3 open house events
- 2 public surveys
- Plus, many online and in-person interactions with property owners, businesses, and community members who walk, bike, roll, drive and use public transit

Design highlights include:

- 112 bike parking spaces including an electric bike/scooter charging station
- 97 short-term seating options along accessible, curbless sidewalks
- Eight blocks with street festival/event options with improved and new decorative lighting

Construction begins in spring

Construction begins this spring in three phases along 10 blocks of Main Street. Work will occur one to two blocks at a time with open pedestrian access inside



the work zone, and car traffic lanes open outside the work zone. Buildings will remain open during construction that begins at 5th Street and move towards 15th Street.

Anticipated timeline:

- Summer 2024: reconstruct sewer utilities
- Fall/Winter 2024: reconstruct water utilities
- 2025-2026: remaining streetscape construction

Visit Main Street during the upgrades to support our local businesses. Learn more at beheardvancouver.org/mainstreetpromise.



Turn waste into nutrient-rich compost

In one year, Washingtonians tossed 115,000 tons of yard waste into the garbage. That waste ends up in landfills. Washington recently passed laws to divert this material from landfills and support community composting.

As the spring and summer growing seasons get closer, help reroute organic material, avoid landfills and better manage your yard debris by taking advantage of these local resources:



- **Backyard Composting:** Join Clark County's Composter Recycler Program workshops, clarkcountycomposts.org
- **Spring Cleanup Coupons:** Use yard debris coupons mailed to Vancouver residents with active garbage service each April for free disposal of leaves, grass and pruning debris
- **Curbside Organics:** Subscribe to Organics service to have yard debris and food scraps collected at the curb, wcnorthwest.com/organics
- **Organics 101 Classes:** Attend a free RecycleU educational series: cityofvancouver.us/recycleu
- **Self-haul Yard & Garden Waste:** Take leaves, grass and trimmings from spring pruning to several local drop-off sites, cityofvancouver.us/recyclerright



Cars driving along Mill Plain Boulevard

Preparation for summer pavement work starts now

Work to repair roads and keep our streets in good condition starts well ahead of the summer paving season.

Pruning and protecting trees

The program will work with Urban Forestry to care for and replant street trees. Proactive street tree pruning helps protect the health and structure of trees. Trees keep neighborhoods cool and extend pavement life. Tree and vegetation pruning begins in February

and continues through June, with new street trees planted in fall.

Starting in March, pavement repairs, crack sealing and installation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) curb ramps will take place. Watch for preparations and pavement work along many neighborhood streets and major corridors including Fourth Plain, S.E. Mill Plain, S.E. 164th Avenue, and S.E. 34th Street. Learn more at cityofvancouver.us/pavement.



Latest testing results for PFAS

We are monitoring, researching and planning how to resolve the challenge of PFAS in our water supply. Our extensive water system has 40 wells located at nine wellfields across our community. Recent fourth quarter testing for PFAS showed that one separate sample exceeded the State Action Level for PFAS contaminants at one of the City's nine wellfields, Water Station 14.



Scan the QR code with your phone's camera or visit cityofvancouver.us/pfas to learn more about PFAS and view all sampling results.

INSIDE CITY HALL



City Council

Mayor & Council Office 360-487-8629

Anne McEnery-Ogle, Mayor
Sarah J. Fox | Bart Hansen | Kim D. Harless
Erik Paulsen, Mayor Pro Tem | Diana H. Perez | Ty Stober

Call the City

Abandoned Vehicles	3-1-1
Building and Permits	360-487-7800
Business License	360-487-8410, opt 3
City Liaison	360-487-8604
City Manager's Office	360-487-8600
Code Compliance	360-487-7810
Garbage/Recycling	360-487-7160
Operations Center (streetlights, potholes)	360-487-8177
Parking Services	360-487-8650
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services	360-487-8311
Pay a Utility Bill	360-487-7999
Public Works	360-487-8177
Utility Customer Service	360-487-7999
Vancouver Fire Department	360-487-7212
Vancouver Police Department	360-487-7400

City of Vancouver
Vancouver City Hall
415 W. 6th Street
Vancouver, WA 98660



State of the City & Council Community Forum

6 p.m. Monday, March 18

Firstenburg Community Center
700 N.E. 136th Avenue, Vancouver, WA

Join Vancouver Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle and the Vancouver City Council for the 2024 State of the City and Council Community Forum.



Space is limited—registration required. Visit cityofvancouver.us/stateofthecity or scan the QR code to RSVP.



Save the Date for Summer Recreation

Registration for City of Vancouver recreation camps, classes and activities opens Wednesday, April 17.

- Day camps for ages 6 to 10
- Adventure camps for middle school students
- Summer Playgrounds free lunch programs
- Rock climbing
- Ballet, jazz, line dancing and belly dancing
- Pottery and art classes
- Access to Recreation camps and programs for people with disabilities



Visit cityofvancouver.us/parks to sign up for the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services newsletter for registration reminders, or follow us on Instagram and Facebook.

Looking for a scholarship? Apply now to make sure funds are ready to use when summer registration begins. Scholarships are open to eligible Clark County households and cover half the cost of tuition. Learn more and apply at cityofvancouver.us/scholarship.



Calendar of Events

View more information and other events at cityofvancouver.us/calendar



February

26 City Council Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

March

2 Community Tree Planting Event, Southeast Vancouver
10 a.m. – Noon
S.E. Evergreen Hwy Stormwater Facility
11400 SE Evergreen Hwy

4 City Council Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

11 City Council Workshop: Homelessness Response Update
4 – 6 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

City Council Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

15 Ivy Removal at Marine Park
9:30 a.m. – Noon; *Registration required*
Marine Park, 4550 S.E. Columbia Way

18 State of the City & Council Community Forum
Doors open at 5:30; Event starts at 6 p.m.
Firstenburg Community Center
700 N.E. 136th Ave.

23 World Water Day BioBlitz
9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; *Registration required*
Water Resources Education Center
4600 S.E. Columbia Way

25 City Council Workshop: 2025-26 Biennial Budget
4 – 6 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

City Council Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

27 Beach Cleanup at Marine Park
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.; *Registration required*
Marine Park, 4501 SE Columbia Way

30 Volunteer at Campus Community Garden
10 a.m. – Noon; *Registration required*
Campus Community Garden
N.E. Campus Dr.

April

1 City Council Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

3 Spring Beak Nature Walk
9:30 – 11:30 a.m.; *Registration required*
Water Resources Education Center
4600 S.E. Columbia Way

Grand Bingo Extravaganza
1:30 – 3 p.m.; *Registration required*
Firstenburg Community Center
700 N.E. 136th Ave.

4 Kids Day Out
12:30 – 5:30 p.m.; *Registration required*
Firstenburg Community Center
700 N.E. 136th Ave.

Family Pickleball Night
6 – 7:55 p.m.; *Registration required*
Firstenburg Community Center
700 N.E. 136th Ave.

5 Fortify Your Fun – Fort Building Adventure
6:30 – 8 p.m.; *Registration required*
Firstenburg Community Center
700 N.E. 136th Ave.

8 City Council Workshop: 2025-26 Biennial Budget
4 – 6 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

City Council Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

15 City Council Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

18 Family Trivia Night
6 – 7:30 p.m.; *Registration required*
Firstenburg Community Center
700 N.E. 136th Ave.

22 City Council Workshop: 2025-26 Biennial Budget
4 – 6 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

City Council Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

26 Kids Night Out: Glow Dance Party
6 – 9 p.m.; *Registration required*
Firstenburg Community Center
700 N.E. 136th Ave.

May

6 City Council Meeting
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

13 City Council Meeting: First 2024 Supplemental Budget 1st reading
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

16 All Ages Bingo
6 – 7:30 p.m.; *Registration required*
Firstenburg Community Center
700 N.E. 136th Ave.

20 City Council Meeting: First 2024 Supplemental Budget 1st hearing
6:30 p.m.
Vancouver City Hall, 415 W. 6th St.

