

# Whereas

*Whereas*, our understanding of history shapes our view of the present, and to understand where we are going, we must understand where we are from; and

*Whereas*, 2021 is the 79<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the construction of Vanport, built in 1942; and

*Whereas*, Vanport was once the country's largest public housing project and Oregon's second largest city, with a peak population of 42,500; and

*Whereas*, Vanport was intended as temporary housing for the war workers pouring into Portland from all over the country, supplying labor to three major shipbuilding yards; and

*Whereas*, Vanport was demographically diverse, with African American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian and white populations who all came from elsewhere to work in the shipyards,

*Whereas*, a postwar housing shortage affected all incoming laborers, but due to Portland's discriminatory housing policies of the time such as redlining, many of the African American workers could find no place to live because they were restricted to a small area of Portland that was already at capacity; and

*Whereas*, after the war, the city was also home to many Japanese Americans who returned from prison camps to find Vanport the only place they could procure housing in the Portland area; and

*Whereas*, these groups of people found themselves all strangers together and forged new connections that endured even after Vanport was gone; and

*Whereas*, Vanport was constructed in the Columbia River flood plain and was protected from the river by a series of levees; and

*Whereas*, the Columbia River flooded on May 30, 1948, displacing 18,700 residents, about 6,300 of them African American, leaving them homeless and without most of their belongings;

*Whereas*, at least 15 people died in the Vanport flood. Two were Japanese American who were among many who had few living options when released from concentration camps during WWII; and

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*Whereas,* Vanport Mosaic will hold the 6th Vanport Mosaic Festival from May 26 to June 30 to honor and celebrate Vanport as an essential and often forgotten chapter in Portland's history - A story that provides a template for how we all can live together and create a society that honors history, cultural contributions and paves a way for our humanity and our city to thrive.

*Now, therefore,* I, Ted Wheeler, Mayor of the City of Portland, Oregon, the "City of Roses," do hereby proclaim May 30, 2021 to be

*Vanport Day of Remembrance*

In Portland and encourage all residents to observe this day.

Proclaim May 30, 2021 to be Vanport Day of Remembrance  
(Proclamation introduced by Mayor Wheeler)

Filed May 25, 2021

**MARY HULL CABALLERO**  
**Auditor of the City of Portland**

By Megan Lehman  
Deputy

Commissioners voted as follows (Yea or Nay)

Rubio -  
Ryan -  
Hardesty -  
Mapps -  
Wheeler -