



Office of Mayor Charlie Hales  
City of Portland



## PRESS RELEASE

THURSDAY, AUG. 28, 2014

PORTLAND, OR – Mayor Charlie Hales and Kemper Isely, co-president of Natural Grocers, announced today that property owned by the Portland Development Commission at Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Alberta Street will be the site for a new community-centric grocery store that focuses on free nutrition education and healthy food.

Three months ago, Mayor Hales and PDC staff urged the project developer, Majestic Realty Co., to remain committed to the project and to find another anchor tenant for the 1.79-acre property, following the decision by Trader Joe's not to locate a store on the site.

“The challenges this development has faced have been well documented,” Mayor Hales said. “But thanks to the determination of the public and private partners involved, we’re now able to present a development that will benefit the residents of Northeast Portland, support neighboring businesses, introduce Portlanders to a high-quality, affordable grocer and revitalize a parcel of land that has sat dormant for 15 years.”

In March, the mayor committed an additional \$20 million in urban renewal funds to affordable housing in North and Northeast Portland to complement commercial development efforts on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The Portland Housing Bureau, led by Commissioner Dan Saltzman, is conducting a community involvement process to develop a North/Northeast Neighborhood Housing Strategy to help direct that investment.

Natural Grocers is a Colorado-based chain with stores in 14 states. The company currently has seven locations in Oregon, including four in the Portland area, as well as a new store set to open in Eugene on September 23.

“We have felt instantly at home in Oregon and the Portland area and are very excited to partner on this new development and start building a lasting and beneficial relationship with the community on Portland’s Northeast side,” Isely said. “The values Portlanders embrace around fresh, local food; resource conservation; and community involvement are perfectly aligned with the business model we’ve had in place since my parents founded the company nearly 60 years ago.”

Beyond a place to buy healthy food, the new store brings many additional benefits to the Northeast Portland community, including: an on-site credentialed nutritional health coach, provided at no charge, to answer questions, help with meal planning and provide one-on-one nutrition counseling, along with other free nutrition education options like cooking classes and demonstrations, and lectures on topics of interest to the community. “We work hard to make healthy options affordable so that customers feel empowered in our stores,” Isely added. “We are deeply committed to our neighbors and we look forward to being part of the Portland community for years to come.”

Preliminary design work will start in early September. In addition to Natural Grocers, the development, when complete, will include commercial and retail space to house between four and 10 businesses.

A community benefits agreement and elements of the project design will be developed by a project working group. The group will include representatives from nearby neighborhood, business and community associations and will be formed in the next few weeks. Their work will inform the overall project design and development.

Colas Construction of Portland was selected in January as project general contractor. “I grew up and now reside in North Portland and I am honored to have Colas Construction lead a project that will deliver real jobs, real amenities and real opportunities for neighborhood residents,” said Andrew Colas, president of Colas Construction. “I want to thank Majestic Realty for the commitment to us, to this neighborhood and to this project. I am so excited to break ground.”

Work on the project is expected to begin in late fall.